Imaging the Role of Women in Changing Social-Cultural Contexts:

A Study of Female Representations in Murals of Pre-Modern Sri Lanka

Two Volumes

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Dulma Niroshini Karunarathna

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School of History, Classics and Archaeology

Newcastle University

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Abstract

The historical roles of women have been neglected in Sri Lankan archaeology. This study unveils the image of women and offers alternative explanations that contextualize the female in pre-modern history. The thesis is the first of its kind undertaken in Sri Lanka as a cross-regional study, with a view to understanding female representations depicted in murals and their social context in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The murals that embellished the Buddhist temples of pre-modern Sri Lanka were examined as primary sources for a comparative study. Primary data were collected through observational fieldwork and museum surveys. The mural paintings have generally been taken as decorative in the past, but this research considers their value for deciphering coded forms of communication and a visual language which reflects contemporary social dynamics. Geographically, the research focuses on two geographical areas, up-and low-country. Iconographic analysis and social archaeology of gender are applied as the main theoretical approaches to examine the social space occupied by women through three different streams: their religious life, empowerment and social identity.

The thesis argues that in the mural paintings influenced women's lives by informing social behaviour, values and identity. Artists reinforced the idea of the role of mother as an embodiment of compassion. The murals of the 'great' tradition represent the ideal practices of the time and through them artists reinforced social norms. At the same time, the depictions of the artists in the provincial tradition offer an alternative profile of energetic and empowered women, providing an alternative picture beyond the ideals and stereotypes. This research challenges the notion of gendered divisions of labour and suggests to us that the gender roles of pre-modern households was flexible and interchangeable and the economic self-reliance of women which empowered them within the household.

Abbreviations

CE - Common Era

BCE - Before Common Era

BP - Before Present

RMV - *Raja Mahā Vihāra*

PV - *Purana Vihāra*

TV - *Tempita Vihāra*

MV - *Mahā Vihāra*

V- Vih*ā*ra

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Significance of the Study

Historical studies of South Asia in general, and Sri Lanka in particular, have tended to assign a less prominent place to the 'women' than the 'men' and place women in the background, a phenomenon which can be understood as being hidden in history. Not only in Sri Lanka but all over the world, archaeological historiography has tended to be androcentric and reluctant to reconstruct women's past (Nelson 2006; Gilchrist 1994; Rowbotham 1973; Kim 2012). The textual sources which are used for the historiography of Sri Lanka were mainly generated by men and are also androcentric. For instance, the *Mahāvaṃsa*, the great chronicle which has provided the historical narrative for Sri Lanka, was written by Buddhist monks.[1] Simultaneously, the majority of the historical materials used in Sri Lankan historiography are patriarchal (Tennent 1860) and the work of elite men (Andaya 2002). The main objective of these sources was not to record the history of the country but to praise the political history and the role of the king as a hero. As a result, the historical materials elaborately magnified the personality of the king as a patron of Buddhism and the social roles of the kings were greatly commented upon. The historical literature of Sri Lanka, *Mahāvaṃsa* in particular, allocated many paragraphs to eulogizing selected rulers such as Duttagamini, Parakramabahu I, and Kirti Sri Rajasimha,[2] who were elevated to the level of great men in Sri Lankan history. Consequently, it is obvious that historical literature often enriches dynastic or political history, and the role of women is hidden within the pages of those narratives. The historians who read this history, however, were mainly influenced by the colonial context and by the perspective of the nationalist movement of the late colonial period. They used these historical sources in their historiography, and replicated a story of the rise and fall of the dynasties who ruled the country. As result, the story of women

[1] The first part of *Mahāvaṃsa* was written in fifth century CE by Rev. Mahanama, a monk who lived in *Mahāvihāra*. Its continuation, or the second part, called the *Cūlavaṃsa* was written by Rev. Tibbatuwawe Siddhartha. Thapar examines the contribution of monastic chronicles of Sri Lanka as materials in reconstructing its history (Thapar 2013: 414-441) and discuses the dimensions of *Mahāvaṃsa* and its historiography.

[2] *Cūlavaṃsa* uses 483 verses (Geiger 1992: ch. 99, vv.1-182 - ch. 100, vv. 1-301) to describe the glory of Kirti Sri Rajasimha who ruled the country in the eighteenth century.

was muted again. The aim of this study is to uncover aspects of the story of these women.

Another prominent feature of Sri Lankan historiography is the tendency to highlight the story of ruling dynasties, and often to discuss the women in relation to the men, or in a secondary situation. This is not to say that the historical sources of Sri Lanka are completely silent about women. The literary sources, including *Mahāvaṃsa*, do speak about women, it is important to consider when, why and how the composers of these sources shifted the women into the foreground. It is notable that the author of *Mahāvaṃsa* praises the meritorious acts of queens, mothers and other women of the royal family where he wants to illuminate the personality and the glory of the king. For instance, *Mahāvaṃsa* never mentions the wife of King Duttagamini, yet ten chapters were allocated to reporting the sovereignty of the king. *Mahāvaṃsa* does talk about the king's son, but it is unusual to discuss a son without a mother.[3] At the same time, *Mahāvaṃsa* highly praised the personality of King Duttagamini's mother, Vihara Maha Devi, her involvement in political affairs and her leadership and advice, which illuminated the political career of the king. However, the *Mahāvaṃsa* is again silent concerning the mother of Duttagamini once the king claimed power. This clearly demonstrates the intention of the author, and how and when the author of *Mahāvaṃsa* highlights women to underline the activities of his political heroes.

The most notable example for placing women in a secondary position is the accounts of *Mahāvaṃsa* and *Rājāvalī*[4] of King Wimala Dharma Suriya, who lived in the late medieval period (1592 -1606).[5] When he came to the throne, he established power in the Kandyan kingdom by marrying Dona Catherina alias Kusumasana Devi, who was the real heir. Nevertheless, the authors of *Mahāvaṃsa* and *Rājāvalī* are reluctant to emphasize the political authority of Dona Catherina, perhaps because the authors may

[3] It is believed that King Duttagamini was married to Ranmenika the daughter of a farmer of the house *Vīsuru Gedara* in the village of Kotagepitiya, Kotmale in Kandy District. This is a very popular story in Kandyan folk lore. If this was the true story of the wife of the king, it may have discouraged the author to mention a woman who was not a member of the royal line becoming the wife of the great personality created by him. On the other hand, the epigraphical evidence reported by Paranavitana hints that Millakkha Tissa, the wife of King Duttagamini, is also hidden in *Mahāvaṃsa* (Paranavitana 1970)

4A chronicle written in the seventeenth century which narrates mainly the political history of Sri Lanka from its beginning up to the end of seventeenth century (Gunasekara 1990).

[5]All dates given are Common Era (CE) unless otherwise stated

have thought that highlighting her power would be unbecoming for their hero, Wimala Dharma Suriya. Consequently, these accounts pretended that King Wimala Dharma Suriya was a descendent of the Sola dynasty of Gangasiripura, though there was no evidence of such a dynasty in Sri Lankan history.

It is essential to stress that reconstructing the history of women has also been a neglected area in Sri Lankan archaeological research. This study will be the first of its kind undertaken in Sri Lanka an inicial cross-regional study, with a view to understanding the portrayal of women in murals in their proper social context during the period from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century.

It is important to note that few historical studies have attempted to explain the experience of women in historic periods. The majority of these studies focus on the early[6] and late historic[7]periods, where there is ample archaeological and textual evidence to enrich the religio-political history of women. Over the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in the popularity of gender research in Sri Lanka,[8] however, they mainly focus on the twentieth century and also, in relation to social and economic history, the anti-colonial movement. The prevailing knowledge gap creates an urgent need to reconstruct the social archaeology of women in pre-modern times in Sri Lanka, and recent developments in the field of social archaeology have heightened the need for an alternative historiography, constructed through a comparative study. Gender studies have consistently shown that there was gender discrimination in Sri Lankan society (Perera 1997); current knowledge of the position of women is poor. More recently, literature has emerged which introduces contradictory findings about the gender of modern Sri Lankan contexts and the position of women projected by these studies has become a major issue. Previous studies tend to suggest the subordination of women and stereotyped gender identity practiced through time and space. Consideration of the material evidence of pre-modern Sri Lanka, plus observation of these depictions against more linear views, may lead to an alternative perspective derived from archaeology for women beyond the stereotyped image.

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[6] From third century BCE-first century BCE

[7] From first century – tenth century

[8] See section 2.3, Chapter 2

Studying art forms has been one of the most popular areas of classical archaeological research in Sri Lanka. There was a period when studying classical art and architecture was understood as the only valied archaeology of Sri Lanka.[9] So far, there has been little discussion about the social archaeology that emerged though these art forms, and far too little attention has been paid to the image of women depicted by the artists (Kiribamune 2000; Kiribamune and Seneviratne 2013). This research attempts to examine neglected material evidence in locating the role of women. It goes beyond admiring Sri Lankan classical heritage and attempts to read between the lines of those arts in order to reconstruct women's past. The study examines the murals created by the royal artists, as well as the village artists, which help to understand the social archaeology of both great and small traditions. At the same time, art as a medium demonstrates the social norms and consensuses of respective societies. This visual language affords an opportunity to uncover these invisible women, understand their social behaviour, unheard voice and what society expected from them. In order to create the most accurate picture and build a logical analysis, the profile of women presented in the murals of pre-modern times is compared with that of other art forms and textual sources.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The foremost aim of the study is to understand the varying profiles of woman in pre-modern Sri Lankan history as a multi-faceted gender construct. The popular belief is that women were only for mothering, child-bearing and child-rearing while also being identified as sexual objects. The concept of the mother goddess, despite the potential for women to be seen as symbols of fertility, has been obscured. It is universally accepted that the reproductive system and the biological make-up of the female body confer the status of motherhood. Is it reasonable to limit her role solely to child-bearer or child-rearer? The new theoretical approach of gender archaeology shows that the role of women in societies of the past can be contextualised in a wider range of activities (Nelson 2006: 1-19). In this study too, it is important that we understand the different and visible roles played by women and their multi-faceted contribution to society. This

[9] See section 2.4, Chapter 2

will enable us to question and dispel many myths about women in our history. Such new information may ultimately be used in a productive manner to establish the rights of women and their legitimate position in society.

This research also aims to offer alternative explanations when contextualizing women in history. The information enables us to build up our understanding of women who contribute their social capital in the private sphere, and their active involvement in a range of activities in the public sphere, with the aim of presenting an alternative history of women to any that has yet been attempted in the historiography of Sri Lanka. To date there has been little attention to gender as a tool for historical analysis in Sri Lanka. The research of Wimaladharma (2003) and the articles of Kiribamune (2000) attempted to draw the attention of historians towards a theoretical approach to reading the past with reference to gender.

Popular tradition in Sri Lankan history tends to narrate the events at political capitals, plus the political careers of royalty. This history of the 'great' tradition has sidelined the history of parallel but uneven societies beyond these political structures. The use of material evidence from urban religious centres and rural areas can enrich research; the conclusions of this study attempt to understand how women lived in changing social contexts in pre-modern Sri Lanka.

This thesis examines women's history through the study of temple murals in pre-modern Sri Lanka. One important aspect of this research compares and contrasts the evidence of the position for women available in Kandyan (up-country), western and southern coastal areas (low-country), and other parts of Sri Lanka[10] through a cross-regional and cross-cultural study (Figure 1). There are some background factors for understanding these regions for a cross-regional study. The main point is that up-contry as a feudal society and both regions confronted the external political influences of south Indian and European colonialism and, accordingly, this shaped the socio-cultural geography of the areas (De Silva 2005). Internal and external relationships in these localities shaped the socio-cultural context of these regions and, as a result, the social attitudes towards women also varied from one society to the other. Comparing the role

[10] The details about these areas are discussed in the section on the spatial framework of the study in Chapter 3

of women constructed through visual evidence produced by respective societies provides a reasonable platform to place women in pre-modern Sri Lankan society. At the same time, the main sources of this study, the temple murals, were created in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a period that witnessed social reforms and transitions. Understanding the tendencies of the social norms, social consensuses and gender ideologies over time is also noted as an important element in the research. The conclusions of this study examine how women lived in changing social contexts in pre-modern Sri Lanka. The significance of the study is therefore multifaceted. To date, there has been no study examining the mural paintings from a gender-based perspective. This study will establish a bench-mark for future research on women's roles in Sri Lankan history.

The mural paintings are the main primary sources of this study. The data were collected through an observational field survey. The spatial frame of the study encompasses mainly two different regions of Sri Lanka. They are popularly known as the up-country, or the Kandyan territories, and the low-country, or the western and southern coastal areas (Figure 1). The Buddhist temples representing both up-and low-countries, where the walls of the image houses have been adorned with murals, were selected as the main primary sources for the study.

1.3 Thesis Structure

The main body of this thesis consists of three main streams which discuss three different aspects of women's social history; the religious life of women, the women's roles and how women were empowered economically, politically and educationally, and the social position and gender identity of women. The sub-topics of these chapters were decided based on the depictions provided by the murals of the time. The observation of art forms made out of stone, wood, ivory and other meterials is also utilized as a source to supplement the potrayal of women depicted in mural paintings. Since the iconography is not the entire picture of the past, the profile of women as depicted in murals is compared and contrasted with similar ideas related in the literary sources. By means of both local and foreign textual sources, the visual representation of women projected by the murals is reinforced. The review and utilization of knowledge obtained from secondary sources on women in ancient Sri Lanka, and other theoretical studies on

gender issues, is also incorporated into this study in order to contextualize the position of women. The multi-disciplinary application of information from disciplines including archaeology, history, art history, anthropology, and ethno-archaeology, also helps to fix the fragmentary nature of the history of women.

It is essential to understand the historical background of Sri Lanka, and this is summarised in: section 1.4 of this chapter. It provides a brief historical overview of the country mainly focusing upon the history of women in relation to the traditional lineage of kings. The historical overview of women's history in the early and medieval history of Sri Lanka is briefly discussed, and the history of the country from the sixteenth century is described in more detail. Generally, a traditional narrative history is laid out in the introduction, and then the main chapters of the thesis contrast the alternative history revealed by the mural paintings of Sri Lanka.

The second chapter reviews existing knowledge of different study areas, such as Sri Lankan history, art history, religious history, women's history and gender archaeology. This chapter introduces the nature of the historiography of the country and the approaches of reading the past. This section investigates what has already been studied and how it has been researched, which enables one to identify the key issues in the literature. This understanding highlights the urgency of bridging the gaps of the social history of the country instead of researching the political history, and the knowledge gap in the social archaeology of gender in Sri Lanka. The second part of the chapter is dedicated to explaining how the history of women has to be investigated. Here, this study introduces the main approaches of the social archaeology of gender and iconographic analysis, discussing how these can be applied and the relevance of these approaches to reconstructing the role of women depicted in an art from. The third chapter of the thesis discusses the methodology of the research. It clearly introduces the main sources of the research and why they were selected. Then the limitations of the primary sources are discussed and how the application of supplementary sources build up a unvalid role of women. At the same time, this shows the potential problems arising from using literary sources.

With murals as the main sources of the study, a section of the third chapter provides an account of the artists who contributed to the painting of these murals. Understanding the

social background of the artist is very important to reading the hidden social ideas in these images. This is followed by an outline of the chronology of the murals used. One of the most general issues of art history in Sri Lanka is a generalized interpretation without considering the time and space of the art forms. Despite restricting this study to a short period, subtle social tendencies are evident from a study of the murals. Therefore, understanding the construction years of the temples helps to contextualize the interpretations of the study. The main section of this chapter explains the procedures of data collection, data recording and data analysis, as well as discussing the theoretical approach.

As mentioned above, the main sources for the study come from religious contexts. Therefore, Chapter 4 deals with the religious life of women as depicted in murals. In order to attain a picture of the religious world of women, this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section identifies women's roles in the religious sphere. Society was divided into four categories as prescribed by the Buddha, and this section investigates how the artists of the time represented the female halves of these divisions. The second section examines a range of religious activities performed by women as female lay devotees; for instance, visiting religious places, alms-giving practices, attending religious festivals and also the economic empowerment of women as religious patrons. It is important to note that a shared cultural symbolism is vividly evident in these murals, although this research observes a set of source materials which are traditionally noted as Sinhalese Buddhist. This helps the study to understand the social norms beyond the great tradition. Sections 4.4 of Chapter 4 discusses how female cults, which were known to be multi-cultural, were incorporated into Buddhist murals of the period whilst also examining what background factors led to such female cults and the function of the feminine as an auspicious symbol. In the same section, the enshrined image of Queen Victoria in Buddhist murals is discussed, inquiring into the socio-political forces behind the use of the Queen's figure in Buddhist image houses. The final section of this chapter places women in religious history, examining social perceptions towards the religiosity of women in pre-modern Sri Lanka.

Chapter 5 mainly focuses on how women in pre-modern society were empowered through their representation in the murals. The first section examines the nature of the division of labour at the time, discussing the role of women in both private and public

spheres. The importance of this section is that it reveals the role of women through a range of activities. Though there was a gendered division of labour prevalent during the period, women contributed towards the household economy in many ways, and the husband's role as a care-giver for young children offers novel historical interpretations of Sri Lankan history. At the same time, the next section of this chapter demonstrates the employment of women in the royal palace and it provides evidence of stereotyped women's roles and how the sex of women was understood in traditional society. In the final sections of the chapter, discussion of evidence about the women in dicission-making and women's education at the time show way women were empowered. Comparison of the limited information depicted in murals and the literary sources shows that, in general, society did not prioritise women's education.

The sixth chapter examines social relationships and the identity of women within these social contexts. The first section discusses the marriage scenes depicted in murals and the gender hierarchy and gender relations projected through these scenes by the artist. The next section talks about the nature of different travelling methods used by women. This mainly questions how they were used and whether there was any discrimination in the use of these methods by women. At the same time, the position of women and the seating postures in each travelling method can indicate the power relations and gender identity attributed to women. Section 6.3 examines gestures of worship. The nature of this movement, depicted by different artists in different localities, helps us to create a picture of gender relations and the power of gendered social relationships within each social context. This chapter then examines how artists presented the sorrow of women and examines social ideas regarding the emotional sensitiveness of women, showing how it differed from that of men. It helps us to understand how artists reinforced the social notion of gender characteristics in the role of women and women's gender identity in pre-modern Sri Lanka. The final section of this chapter attempts to understand the methods of the artists towards depicting sex and gender identity.

Chapter 7 summarizes the research findings, and presents the argument of the research and the new interpretations as the concluding points of the study. At the same time, this chapter notes the limitations of the study and puts forward suggestions for future research in the field of the social archaeology of gender.

1.4 Historical Background of Pre-Modern Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an island in the Indian Ocean and this location has significantly shaped her history over thousands of years. Though the archaeological evidence from prehistoric Sri Lanka dates back to approximately 35,000 BP.,[11] epigraphic evidence dates back to the third Century BCE.[12] Fortunately, the history of women of Sri Lanka can also be started from the same period (Kiribamune 1990a: 16), as very strong archaeological evidence scattered all over the country relates directly to the institutional background of women in earlyhistoric Sri Lanka, and the religious history of women in particular. The *Mahāvaṃsa*, however, starts its narration on the early settlements of Sri Lanka with the story of Kuveni, the female leader who represented a local tribe. The historiography of *Mahāvaṃsa* illustrates to us some ideas of female leadership and the close relationship of women with special crafts stated by *Mahāvaṃsa* about Kuveni, who was spinning when Prince Vijaya arrived in Sri Lanka in the sixth century BCE (Geiger 1950: Ch. 7, vv. 11-27). Although there are debates about the historiography of *Mahāvaṃsa,* the early *Brāhmi* inscriptions of the time strongly suggest the economic empowerment of women and the religious freedom they enjoyed (Kiribane 1990a: 15-29). Confirming the picture projected by the epigraphic evidence, the *Mahāvaṃsa* and *Dīpavaṃsa*[13] elaborately describe how women gained their religious rights by marking the establishment of an order of nuns, with the renunciation of a wordly life by women from the royal family (Kiribane 1990a: 29-40). According to the *Mahāvaṃsa*, there were two female rulers in the early historic period in the country namely Queen Anula (Geiger 1950: ch. 34 vv.15-30) and Queen Sivali (Geiger 1950: ch. 35, v.14).[14] Although they ruled the country for only short periods, the acceptance of female leadership by the people of the country at the time demonstrates the political power of women in the period. Both textual and archaeological evidence show the political power of women, some matrilineal inheritance of kingship, and the active involvement of women in

[11] Deraniyagala, S.U. (1992) has examined about the Prehistoric Sri Lanka dating the oldest skeletal remains of the country.

[12] Early *Brāhmi* inscriptions are dated to third century BCE by Paranavitana (1970b)

[13] The oldest chronicle provides a historical account of Sri Lanka. It is believed that it was written by a Buddhist nun in the fifth century

[14] Her reign was lasted only four months in the year 33

political affairs. The image of Vihara Maha Devi (Geiger 1950: ch. 22-32) is prominent among them. A unique feature of the historiography of *Mahāvaṃsa,* as a record of deeds of the kings, is that they describe the meritorious or victorious acts of the women of the royal family. Deconstructing these events, then reconstructing women's history using such evidence and comparing this with other sources, contributes to building the history of women's power.

It is notable that the presence of two queens, namely Lilavati (Geiger 1992: ch. 80, v.30) and Kalyanavati (Geiger 1950: ch. 80, vv.30-36), and the kings who claimed power through matrilineal inheritance, is evident in medieval history (Paranavitana 1933: 235-240). Fetching the wives of Sri Lankan rulers from India created a different scenario in the history of women and the political arena of the country at the time. This resulted in many external threats from South India, and the stability of the political authority of medieval Sri Lanka was challenged with the decline of the medieval kingdom. This period can be recognized as a time which marks a loss of women's religious rights. The extinction of both the order of nuns and monks because of South India's invasion, and the establishment of rival orders of monks (Geiger 1950: ch. 60, vv.4-8) later in the reign of King Vinjabahu I (Kiribamune 1990a: 34-35), meant that knowledge of the order of nuns was lost with consequence diminution in the religious roles of women.

The volatile political situation of the country meant the capital moved to many places, Dambadeniya, Yapahuwa, Kurunegala, Gampola and Kotte in the latemedieval pariod. A milestone in the political history of Sri Lanka was marked by the arrival of the Portuguese in 1505. Sri Lanka had divided into several kingdoms by this time, namely Kotte, Raigama, Sitawaka, Kandy and Jaffna (Abesinghe 1966). Women's prominence in political life was a most important feature of the time. The Kandyan dynasty is associated with Kirawalle Kumarihamai, a famous and powerful royal woman. It is said that the establishment of the Kandyan Kingdom was carried out by Senasammata Wikramabahu (Abesinghe *et al* 1977: 05-21 and Dewaraja 1988: 18). Later, the political struggle between the kingdoms of Kotte and Kandy ended with several political marriages. The marriage of the sister of Karalliyadde Bandara and Don Juwan Darmapala, King of Kotte, is a notable example. Likewise, after the death of the sister of Karalliyadde Bandara, his daughter Dona Margarida married Darmapala by means of a political alliance (Abesinghe *et al* 1977: 18-19). The policy of matrimonial alliance

was very significant in latemedieval history. The Portuguese also understood who the real heir of the Kandyan Kingdom was and they gave political protection to Karalliyadde Bandara and his family in order to gain power themselves (Abesinghe *et al* 1977: 23-24). After her baptism of Kusumasana Devi, the daughter of Karalliyadde Bandara, she was renamed Dona Catherina, marking the beginning of major social changes associated with colonization (de Silva and Beumer 1998: 13), however, Konappu Bandara, alias Wimla Dharma Suriya I (1590 -1604), become the ruler of the Kandyan kingdom instead of Dona Catherina (Dewaraja 1988: 19-20; Abesinghe *et al* 1977: 24; de Silva and Beumer 1998: 19). *Cūlavaṃsa* (Geiger 1992: ch. 94, vv.1-8) and *Rājāvaliya* (Gunasekara 1990: 89) described him as a descendant of the Solar dynasty of Gangasiripura. Whether Wimala Dharma Suriya I was affiliated to a royal family is debated and he is recognized as a member of the elite but not as an heir to the throne. He made his path to the throne by marrying Dona Catherina, and therefore Dona Catherina is recognized as the most powerful character of the Kandyan political arena. As Dewaraja noted, "Wimala Dharma Suriya himself claimed his right to the throne through his wife: and all succeeding kings established their connection with her" (Dewaraja 1988: 20). de Silva and Beumer also note that Wimala Dharma Suriya consolidated his position by marrying Dona Catherina and the, "the marriage was celebrated with great magnificence and rejoicing, the festivities continuing for 110 days at an expense of 5005 pagodas, besides that contributed by the inhabitants according to the custom of the country. The presents bestowed by the Emperor upon the inhabitants and the many of the nobility, as a reward for their services, amounted to no less than 968,754 pagodas…"(de Silva and Beumer 1998: 19). The magnificence of the marriage ceremony was an assertion of King Wimala Dharma Suriya's desire to proclaim his political authority. The expenditure and the presents also amplify the king's anticipation to boast his power and prestige which achieved by the marriage to the peasants and elites.

The reign of King Wimla Dharma Suriya I is considered to be one of the most glorious in the age of the Sinhalese Buddhist Kingdom of the latemedieval period in Sri Lanka, according to the literary sources of the time, such as *Cūlavaṃsa, Rājāwaliya* and

Mandārampura Puwata.[15] According to the *Cūlavaṃsa,* King Wimla Dharma Suriya I built the Tooth Temple, a two storeyed building, which is considered amongst the most significant his religious acts (Geiger 1992: ch. 94, vv.11-14). Likewise, by sending a religious mission to Burma and reviving the monastic order in Sri Lanka, his reign is considered one of the most significant in Buddhist history (Geiger 1992: ch. 94, vv. 15-20).

Dewaraja mentions a quote of de Queiroz,[16]

> "The next king, Senarat [1604-35], cousin of Wimala Dharma Suriya married the widowed Kusumasana Devi, in order to legalize his position. When she died in 1612, Senarat took to wife her daughter by her first husband, Suriya Mahadassin. She too died in 1617, and then the king espoused Kusumasana Devi's second daughter by WimalaDharma Suriya Antassin. These marriages show that Senarat realized the weakness of his claim and tried to establish his relationship with the old dynasty of Kandy through Kusumasana Devi" (Dewaraja 1988: 20).

It is interesting to note that the description of *Mandārampura Puvata* about a political mission of King Senarat to Batticala, in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, mentions Queen Dona Catherina's presence in the political mission (Lankananda 1996: v. 257). The political power of Dona Catherina may have influenced the requirement of her involvement in the mission since the King was not a descendant of the royal line. The reign of King Senarat is very important in women's history in Sri Lanka as we note the political empowerment of women and meet a very talented female fighter, Punchi Manika, who defeated the male royal fighter. She was also appointed as the first Sri Lankan female *Disāvē*.[17] The arrival of a woman into an administrative position, giving her privileges which were enjoyed only by men of the same rank, highlights women's power at the time. The story of Punchi Manika or the *Ēdanduwāwē Gánu Disāvē* is not remembered in the great chronicles or other literary sources in popular tradition, however, Bell notes the royal deeds and grants she received (Bell 1904: 50). Even so, her story is hugely popular among the folk traditions of the up-country.

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[15] A historical anthology was written in Sinhala which describes mainly the political events of the history of late-medieval Sri Lanka.

[16] Father Fernão de Queiroz was a Portuguese theologist lived in seventeenth century he is recognized as "the greatest Portuguese historian of Ceylon" (Schurhammer 1929: 215)

[17] *Disave* was the official who possessed both judicial and executive (civil and military) authority of regional devolution of Kandyan Kingdom (Pieris 1956:23-26).

The successor of Senarat was the most able of the line, Rajasimha II (1635-1687), the son of Dona Catherina and Senarat (Dewaraja 1988: 20). Dewaraja notes that "the matrilineal descent was a recognized institution in the Sinhalese royal family" and "several eminent rulers similarly traced their descent through the female line" (Dewaraja 1988: 20-21). King Rajasinghe II is particularly famous for his martial exploits; he took the necessary steps to banish the Portuguese from the country with the help of the Dutch (Pieris, 1918: 24-32) and expanded the borders of the Kandyan Kingdom. This is a great deal of information about the social history of the country during the reign of King Rajasinghe II in the remarkable written account of Robert Knox, a captive of the Kandyan kingdom for twenty years (Knox 1681). According to literary sources, the king encouraged traditional artists and craftsmen by giving them royal grants. Moreover, the renovation of Matiyagane RMV, granting royal deeds to the Kadadora RMV and the sponsoring of painting and sculptured arts were significant acts carried out by the king in order to enrich the art history of the country (Abesinghe *et al* 1977: 47-48). Knox states that "the right and lawful Queen of King Rajasimha II was a Malabar" (Knox 1681: 46). This is very significant in Sri Lankan history, as the king introduced the tradition of fetching South Indian queens to the Kandyan dynasty and this is corroborated by *Cūlavaṃsa* (Geiger 1992: ch. 96, v.42). The relatives of the queen consorts also arrived in Sri Lanka and they settled in the up-country. At the same time they acted as an influential group to the political authority of the country. The relatives of these South Indians, known as Nayakkars, with local elites established their power more strongly (Dewaraja 1988). The cultural activities and dress code of Nayakkars become the great tradition of the up-country. The clothing, jewelry and hair styles of these women are depicted in up-country murals. The popularity of South Indian fashions is shown by the objects, worn by Nayakkars and up-country elites, is displayed in the National Museum Colombo, the National Museum, Kandy and the British Museum.

King Wimala Dharma Suriya II, the son and the successor of King Rajasinghe II (1686-1705) was also recognized as a king who served the well-being of Buddhism. He enlarged the Tooth Temple into three storeys. He sponsored the renovation of the Dambulla RMV and erected Buddha statues in the temple (Geiger 1992: ch.97 vv.4-7). He also sent a religious mission to Burma to establish the higher ordination in Sri Lanka

(Geiger 1992: ch.97 vv. 59-67-137). It is popularly acknowledged that he started renovating low-country temples too. The fact that he started religious and cultural festivals also helped to acknowledge the religious personality of the king. He also fetched a wife from South India (Geiger 1992: ch. 97 vv. 1-3) and this proved to be a very important tradition in the political history of Sri Lanka, as it was followed by almost every king who succeeded King Wimala Dharma Suriya II (Dewaraja 1988:21).

Sri Vira Parakrama Narendrasinghe's (1705- 1738) name is in the historical records as the last Sinhalese king of pre-modern Sri Lanka. He also sponsored the renovation of the Tooth Temple, leading to the walls being decorated with *Jātaka* stories.[18] Furthermore, he visited many religious places. The king was very interested in hearing "*Prashasti*",[19] which exaggerated the character of the king resulting in the emergence of new poetic traditions. Narendrasinghe is also known to have been an ill-mannered king in the country. He also followed the marriage tradition of fetching south Indian queens (Geiger 1992: ch. 97, vv.24-25).

Vijaya Rajasinghe (1738-1746) gained power in the Kandyan kingdom after the death of Narendrasinghe (Geiger 1992: ch. 98, vv.1-3). He was a South Indian Nayakkar, and he claimed power through his sister, who had married Narendrasinghe but who remained childless. According to the political tradition of South India, the brother of the queen was nominated as the heir to the throne (Dewaraja 1988:91-103). As king, Vijaya Rajasinghe personally visited many religious places and renovated many temples including Alu Vihara in Matale (Lankananda 1996: vv. 514-529). *Cūlavaṃsa* describes how this king also fetched queens from South India in order to protect his royal line (Geiger 1992: ch. 98, vv.5-6), and this marks the most extensive description (Geiger 1992: ch. 98, vv. 1-20) about the donations of material gifts and the religious conscience of women recorded by an androcentric elite bias literature in Sri Lanka,

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[18] *Cūlavaṃsa* states that the king made the necessary arrangements to paint 32 *Jātaka* stories including *Vidura, Guttila, Ummagga, Dadhivāhana, Mahā Kanha, Sutanu, Chaddanta, Dhammadwaja, Dhammapāla, Mahā Janaka, Padamānavaka, Dhammasondi, Mahā Nārada Kassapa, Mahā Paduma, Tēlapatta, Culla Paduma, Sattubhatta, Andhabhūta, Campeyya, Sasa, Visaiha, Kusa, Sutasōma, Tēmiya, Culla Danurdhara, Saccankira, Dummedha, Kālingabōdhi, Sīlava, Mandabba, Vessantara* on the walls of the tooth temple in Kandy (Geiger 1992: ch. 97, vv. 39-47)

[19] felicitating anthology

> "… to establish his own dynasty he fetched princesses from the town of Madhura and made them his chief Mahesis…The Mahesis of the king, too, gave up the false faith to which they had been long attached, and adopted in the best manner possible the true faith which confers immortality. They heard the incomparable, true doctrine of Buddha, the highest protector of the world and thus adored with constant devotion the Buddha and other sacred (objects). In their faith they worshiped the Tooth Relic day by day with sacrifice, with jasmine and other blossoms and with all kind of flower festivals, with sweet beetles mixed with camphor and other things, with lamps with fragrant oil, with sweet-smelling sandal wood and so forth, with divers kind of fragrant incense, with sugar and honey and with other drugs, with garments, ornaments and so on, with silver and gold bowls which were abundantly filled with all that one can chew, eat, sip, drink and taste, with curtains, carpets, and the like, with many articles of use and with costly robes - and thus and otherwise laid up a store of merit. They kept constantly the five moral commandments and the uposatha wows even on days that were not uposathas, diligent in hearing the (sermon of the) true doctrine. Even as the yak cows (protect their tails), so they preserved the memory of the Buddha and the other (sacred objects). They worked for their perfection, had sacred books copied. They strove after the blessing that lies in generosity. They understood to perfection the regular offering of food and other (occasional) distribution of food to wandering or sick (bhikkhus). They were not attached to acquired wealth but dispensed (it in) continual feeding and the like. They made young people renounce the world. Showed them favour of many kinds. They had good instruction given in the knowledge of the sacred scriptures and of pious duties and by dispensing always what was desired they were like to a wishing-tree. Kind beyond measure and very full of pity they thought of all people in Lanka as a mother of her children, and were merciful and mines of virtue. They had images and reliquaries fashioned in the best manner possible and always fearing every sin and ever rejoicing over every meritorious deed, adorned with the ornament of such and any other virtues, they were highly regarded in the whole island of Lanka" (Geiger 1992: ch. 98, vv. 1-20).

Can we rely on this conspicuous account of *Cūlavaṃsa*? We can raise the question of why the author of *Cūlavaṃsa* emphasized the religious life of the queens, a trait which cannot be traced elsewhere in the *Mahāvaṃsa* or *Cūlavaṃsa*. What was the intention of highlighting the religiosity of these women? The kinship of these women to King Kirti Sri Rajasimha provides a sufficient answer to this apparent contradiction. According to the historical literature, including *Cūlavaṃsa*, the queens of King Vijayarajasimha were brought from Madura, South India. The chief queen of the king was barren and her brother King Kirti Sri claimed the throne through this woman. King Kirti Sri had a great desire to establish his identity in Sri Lanka as a Buddhist king, though he was of South Indian Hindu origin. The author of *Cūlavaṃsa* indirectly supports Kirti Sri to assert his Buddhist identity, as its patron, by providing a detailed description of him, dedicating

two chapters (483 verses) in the name of the king. In the same manner, the author of *Cūlavaṃsa* wanted to establish the groundwork of Buddhist identity by stressing the religion of the king's sister who opened the door of throne of Kandyan kingdom to Kirti Sri. Therefore, the author of *Cūlavaṃsa* illuminates the building of the Buddhist Identity of King Kirti Sri by elevating the religiosity of his sister, who was the queen of the previous king. It is notable in light of their androcentric historiography that the authors of *Mahāvaṃsa* and *Cūlavaṃsa* followed this agenda regarding women. At the same time the *Cūlavaṃsa* mentions the participation of the monks, lay men and women to the devotional activities towards the tooth relic (Geiger 1992: ch. 98, v. 50), which clearly shows us the absence of the nuns at this time.

The reign of Kirti Sri Rajasimha (1746-1781) stands out in the Buddhist history of pre-modern Sri Lanka. Revival of Buddhism was noticeable during this time with the guidance of the Most Venerable Velivita Sri Saranankara (Malalgoda 1976: 67-69). As a South Indian and a non-Buddhist, Kirti Sri had a desire to establish his Buddhist identity and become a great patron of Buddhism in order to establish his kingship in Sri Lanka (Holt 1996: 15-39). King Kirti Sri made the necessary steps to renovate many temples and embellish the walls with murals which symbolically represented the ideal Buddhist kingship (Holt 1996: 41-52). *Cūlavaṃsa* helped to disseminate the political acts of King Kirti Sri, and show the Queen and concubines of the King embraced Buddhism and were involved in several Buddhist religious activities, even though they were South Indian non-Buddhists (Geiger 1992: ch.98, vv. 2-6). The visual liturgy, presented under the patronage of Kirti Sri, represented the great traditions of art history in pre-modern times. The murals of Medawala RMV, Ridi Vihara RMV, Gangarama RMV and Degaldoruwa RMV are considered as the masterpieces of the time (Bandaranayake and Gamini 1986) and they are included in this study. It is known that the majority of the kings of the time fetched their queens from South India, and therefore the arrival of their South Indian Hindu relations in Kandy resulted in cultural diversity in the up-county. The mode of dress, the incorporation of Hindu religious practices into the Buddhist pantheon and shared cultural symbols are all clearly visible in up-country paintings.

Rajadhi Raja (1782-1798) was the brother and successor of King Kirti Sri and he carried on his work. The *Degaldoruwa Sannasa*, the royal written voucher, records the

completion of the art work at Degaldoruwa RMV, and likewise many other temples were constructed during this period (Lawrie 1898: 139). His reign also saw a number of female poets (Lawrie 1898:87), including one named "Balawatwala Mahatamayo",[20] who lived in the reign of King Rajadhi Rajasingha. Her existence is supported by the evidence of a palm-leaf manuscript of the anthology "*Anurāgamālaya*" stored in the British Museum collection.[21] Gajaman Nona, alias Dona Isabella Koranelia, a low-country woman who lived in this period, acquired her literacy by disguising herself as a male while she was having her traditional education. She was a well-known poetess who communicated with Sir John D'Oyly who granted a village valuing her poetic talents (Gunasekera 1991:16-18). The story of Gajaman Nona convinces us how women's education had been neglected at the time and of the gender discrimination faced by women by lack of education. Sri Vikrama Rajasimha (1798-1815), also a Nayakkar ruler, was the last Sri Lankan king. He also renovated some Buddhist temples. According to folk literature, he was considered a merciless ruler. The assassination of the wife and children of Prime Minister Ahalepola made his name very unpopular. The *Vaḍuga Haṭana*[22] clearly shows the abhorrence of Sinhalese towards the king and his *Vaḍuga* Dynasty.[23] The disgust of the people towards the barbaric acts of the king provided an opportunity for British rulers to fish in mud water: establish their power in Sri Lanka, for instance, the assassination of Ahelepola Kumarihami and three of her children can be mentioned (Gunasekara1982 and Abesinghe *et al* 1977).

Sri Lanka lost its sovereignty during the reign of King Sri Vikrama Rajasimha. The other Europeans, both Portuguese and Dutch, could now gain the power of the maritime areas (western and southern parts) of the country. In contrast, the British rulers established their power gradually, eventually taking the entire country, conquering the

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[20] "…his (Balawatwala Disawa) wife was the poetess Balawatawala Mahatmayo, who flourished in the reign of Rajadhi Raja, whose poems are extant, one of them being '*Anurāgamālaya*'" (Lawrie 1898: 87)

[21] "*Anurāgamālaya*: An anonymous poem is 65 quatrains, distinct from the erotic poem known by the same title, which latter is said to have been composed early in the last century by the Kandyan lady named Balawattala Mahatmayo…"(Wickremasinghe 1900: 114)

[22]*Vaḍuga Haṭana* alias *Ahalēpola Vaṇṇanāva,* is nineteenth century Sinhala heroic poetry (Gunasekara 1982).

[23]A group of South Indians who ruled the Kandyan Kingdom. Dewaraja provides a detail description about the dynasty and its origin (Dewaraja 1988: 26-45)

Kandyan Kingdom in 1815, when Sri Lanka became a crown colony of Britain (Codrington 1917: 231). The Kandyan convention was signed on 15th March 1815 and pledged to protect Buddhism and Buddhist tradition (Abesinghe *et al* 1977: 121-126). The southern coastal areas, however, were highly impacted by European colonialism and the Kandyan territories attempted to regain their sovereignty, even after 1815. As a result of that, there were two rebellions in 1818 and 1845 (Abesinghe *et al* 1977: 126-138). A number of foreign travelers visited the country during the British colonial period and Sri Lanka was renamed "Ceylon" in their notes of the country. These records have been utilized as source materials in this study in reconstructing the socio-economic history of pre-modern Sri Lanka by many scholars.

The most notable factor is that the building of Buddhist temples continued, even during the British colonial period. The economic growth of southern coastal areas created a new aristocracy in the low-country and they became the patrons of very magnificent temples such as Sunandarma PV, Velihinda, Sailabimarama PV and Kumara MV. At the same time, the year 1886 was a very important time for Britain and Sri Lanka. There is strong evidence to suggest that the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria had been celebrated in Sri Lanka in a magnificent way (Ferguson 1887: 170-178). The remarkable fact is that a number of temples were constructed and adorned with mural paintings in 1886, and the presence of the enshrined figure of Queen Victoria in the Buddhist temples is significant.

It is notable that social changes occurred in Sri Lanka because of British colonization and this was highly visible in the low-country social contexts. The socio-cultural background of the country was entirely blended with European culture as a result of colonial education. The people of the low-country embraced European culture and it became the great tradition of the country (Mettananda 1990: 72-95) and the popularity of colonial fashions is the outstanding feature of this society (Wickramasinghe 2003: 8-42). These social influences are undoubtedly detectable in the painting traditions of the low-country. In the murals associated with the temples built during the colonial period, are the human figures with European garments and jewelry. The noble families of southern coastal areas acted like Europeans, embracing the religion and culture of Britain. Although, women had been educated in early historical Sri Lanka, their learning opportunities had ceased during late medieval and pre-modern times, particularly in the

up-country. Under British colonial administration, however, more opportunities opened up for women without considering their castes, and it often encouraged women to have a proper education by the opening of new schools (Mettananda 1990: 41-71). The propagation of Christianity in Sri Lanka was an active movement by British missionary particularly in the low-country. Colonial education and Christianity constructed a new social class in the low-country. These new social changes challenged the traditional Buddhist social environment (Malalgoda 1976: 191-231). Buddhism strived to perpetuate and preserve its sustainability and this religious reformation was named 'Protestant Buddhism' by Gombrich and Obesekera (1988: 202-240). The native Sri Lankans showed their disgust at the British colonial administration by the two great rebellions in 1815 and 1848. In the early part of the twentieth century, the natives were brought together by the nationalist movement in Sri Lanka and it created new social reformation in the country, leading to Sri Lanka independence in 1948.

The aim of this study is to examine the position of women in pre-modern Sri Lanka, focusing on the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. This study selects mural paintings from Buddhist temples created in above time period as a vehicle to understand the social consensuses towards women. Although it limits the examination of women's history to two centuries, the time frame is a transitional period for Sri Lankan history and reflects tangible memories of a shared culture and cultural diversity in different contexts. The murals, as evidence of material culture and multi-vocality, provide a social perception of women along with other primary data, field survey and museum survey. The three main chapters examines three dimensions of women's history which help to disclose the varying profiles of women and their visible social contribution to Sir Lankan pre-modern history.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

The saga of women in the past had been universally veiled in the research arena of archaeology and its multi-dimensional areas.[24] Consequently, the early archaeological interpretations are identified as androcentric or male-centred by numerous gender archaeologists (Conkey and Spector 1984; Geroand Conkey1991; Nelson 1997; 2007 and 2006; Gilchrist 1999). Conkey and Spector state that in archaeological historiography, that men are characteristically represented as active, dominant, ardent, stronger, aggressive or violent and in general more important than women. Women, in contrast, are presented as passive, dependent, maternal, gentle, and tender (Conkey and Spector 1984: 4 and Gilchrist 1999: 64). This male superiority sidelined women into a secondary position in the background. There has been a tendency to discuss women in relation to men in positions such as the mothers, daughters, and wives of men (Conkey and Spector 1984: 13). Androcentric archaeology often limits the role of women to a few stereotyped categories, most commonly as mothers, restricting the social behaviour of women to the domestic sphere (Nelson 1997; Wright 1996). As a result, the voice of women in history has been muted to a great extent and the image of women hidden from historical narrations (Rowbotham 1973; Gilchrist 1998) which is identified by Kim as 'unheard voices' (Kim 2012: 200-204). The phenomenon, known as 'women hidden from histories' in the world of archaeological historiography, can be recognized in a Sri Lankan context, not only in the historiography but also in the historical sources of patriarchy, such as *Mahāvaṃsa,* as discussed in the first chapter. As a result of this, the saga of women in Sri Lankan historical contexts is still an obscured social reality.

It is time to look at the alternative history, beyond the king-centric studies, by deconstructing material evidence and textual sources. The absence of such constructions of alternative history requires a thorough discussion in order to correctly place women in Sri Lankan historical social contexts. In addition, no systematic research has been found in the field of social archaeology which illuminates the position of women in Sri Lanka. Hence, this research is the first attempt of the profile of women as depicted in the mural paintings of pre-modern Sri Lanka (eighteenth century-nineteenth century);

[24] The linked disciplines of archaeology such as anthropology, history, art history, ethnology, sociology

researching the archaeology rather than the political roles of the elites. Envisaging women in the murals of the colonial period may also throw light on their role in society, not as 'hidden', but in a more proactive manner. This research may, to a greater extent, shed light on the positive impact of colonial rule on the more 'emancipated' situation of women during that period.[25] What is important from the point of view of this study and research is filling in the gaps in Sri Lanka women's history. As a result of this, some important and obscure areas of the hidden history of women will be unearthed.

Gilchrist converses about the androcentric periods in world history. Referring to Kelly Gadol's ideas on the above issue, she discusses how wars, political events and the transitions of the rulers were valued in conventional historiography (Gilchrist 1999; Thapar 1990). Similarly, the main characteristic of the historical literature of Sri Lanka also recounts elite-based political history. As discussed in the first chapter, this historical perspective favourably described ruling kings, political invaders, wars, victories and the patrons of religion, creating a lacuna in existing knowledge on the variability of social history beyond the royal palace.

The sections of this chapter discuss the major issues and debates in existing literature, mainly focusing upon what has already been done and how it has been researched or investigated. This is made up of six areas that can directly link with my research perspective. They are the history of Sri Lanka in general in the late medieval and colonial periods, the religious history of women, art and craft history, social archaeology and gender archaeology. These sections briefly identify the approaches of different historical readings and their pitfalls, which misinterpret the social behaviour of the Sri Lankan past. At the same time, the relevance of this literature towards building the approaches of my thesis is underlined.

2.1 Reading the History

This section examines the nature of Sri Lankan historiography in general and identifies the traditions of reading history. A considerable amount of literature has been published on Sri Lankan history, however, the approaches and the perceptions of these studies are

[25] Mettananda discusses about the social reformations of the colonial periods and how it elevates the position of women in terms of education (Mettananda 1990: 41-71)

debatable. The characteristic elite bias of historical reading, which mainly focuses on the accounts of the kings and other related nobles, is one of the key issues that demands the necessity of defining an alternative history for the unseen past.

The earliest writings about Sri Lanka's history were mainly based on colonial constructions. The main streams of their approaches were colonialism, orientalism, imperialism, and antiquarianism. According to the content of this literature, it is clear that the colonial writers had a pre-conceived notion about Sri Lankan culture in attempts to understand Sri Lankan life, behavioural patterns, beliefs and rituals. Therefore, a number of anthropological and ethnological surveys were conducted during the British colonial period. For example, Seligman and Seligman (1911), and Parker (1909) were among those scholars who wrote about the primitive culture of Sri Lanka. At the same time, another group of writers highlighted the static nature of Sri Lankan historical societies and periodised Sri Lankan history into a series of phases based on political structures such as the Anuradhapura Period, the Polonnaruwa Period and the Kandyan Period. This periodisation is still followed by historians and archaeologists. In the historiography of Asia, the emphasis on golden ages and foreign invasion indirectly justified colonial rule (Thapar 1990). Colonial writers such as Percival (1803), Philalethes (1817), Tennent (1860), Codrington (1909, 1924 and 1939), Smither (1894), Parker (1909), Smith (1911 and1912) and Brohier (1934 and 1965) carried out scholarly explorations to understand Sri Lankan culture which they then used as a tool of colonialism.

In contrast, nationalist histories written against this colonial historiography emerged in Sri Lanka during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The desire to highlight the "Golden Era" and the prosperity of past civilizations created an ethnocentric style of historical writings. On one hand, this encouraged local scholars to praise the past glory of the country but, on the other hand, suppressed the writings of social history and the story of the 'little traditions' (Dewasiri 2008: 10-19).

A number of publications exist on the history of the early colonial periods of Sri Lanka. Initial tasks were made by scholars such as Pieris (1918 and 1920) on the colonial influences of the Portuguese and the Dutch. The scholars, including Abesinghe (1966), De Silva (1942), Goonewardane (1958) and Arasaratam (1958) also contributed their

knowledge in order to construct the Portuguese and Dutch history of Ceylon. The handling of Portuguese and Dutch primary sources in their studies is a positive aspect of their research, and they provide empirical evidence to reconstruct the political history of colonial Sri Lanka. These studies enrich the background knowledge of the researchers who wish to understand the impact of colonialism on Sri Lankan history.

Numerous Sri Lankan historical studies have attempted to explain the historical background of the Kandyan Kingdom. The first systematic study of the political history of Sri Lanka was reported by Dewaraja (1988). Dewaraja provides a descriptive picture of the Kandyan kingdom, discussing its international politics and foreign relations in her empirical study. She points out how South Indian Nayakkars established the heirship to the Sri Lankan throne as a foreign dynasty. The political scenario of Kandy is chronologically presented and the relationship between religion and state descriptively examined. The observation of Dewaraja provides adequate background knowledge and empirical data to understand the institutional context of the archaeological data. She lays a concrete foundation for the political history of Sri Lanka by using a wide range of textual sources in her elite-based analysis. However, the sections she discussed about matrilineality and power, enriches the history of women's empowerment in late medieval Sri Lanka.

In 2005, De Silva published the revised and updated edition of his empirical study of Sri Lankan history from the early historic period right up to modern times. He described and discussed the most important historical events of each period of political history. The historical sketch he traces from textual sources provides a basic understanding of socio-economic organization prevalent during the respective periods. The sections where he discusses the colonial history of the country sheds some light on European impact on Sri Lankan society.

Thapar's clarification (2013), concerning handling literary sources in historiography, enlightened the approach towards the application of textual data in a comparative study. Nevertheless she focuses on the historical traditions of North India Thapar explains the common issues of South Asian historiography at the beginning of her book demonstrating to the reader the approach of reading anew. The three sections of part IV of the book exclusively refer to Buddhist historical traditions and the monastic

chronicles of Sri Lanka (Thapar 2013: 415-468) which merge with the main literary source of my research, the *Mahāvaṃsa*. The first chapter of Thapar (1990) significantly demonstrates the changing approaches of Indian historiography and it highlights some common issues of colonial historiography; emphasizing the rise and fall of dynasties and empires, standard images, and the glorious periods of the history.

Wickramasinghe, in her book *Dressing the Colonized Body* (2003), explores the political and economic connotations of clothing in Sri Lankan colonial contexts. Wickramsinghe shows how clothes became a form of non-verbal communication and reflected the identity of the wearer. She builds her scholarship using a number of theoretical studies which highlight feminist theory and the using of colonial sources, reading them anew, which is one of the significant aspects of the study. The nature of questioning the reliance of Christian missionary writing and using them as sources in historiography, provided a guide for my study. In the second chapter, Wickramasinghe provides a brief sketch about the nature of the traditional female dress of medieval Sri Lanka and how it changed through the ages with European influence. However, the picture of female dress provided by Wickramasinghe is limited as she ignores the variety of female garments worn by women of different social status. Wickramasinghe's description regarding the colonial garments imitated by the low-county women is noticeable in murals of the same area. As Wickremasinghe stated, the different fashions introduced by the Portuguese, Dutch and British to Sri Lanka are evident in temple murals. She explains how female dress was influenced by the Victorian code of conduct and this is clearly evident in low-country painting of the late colonial period.

As previously discussed, the fragmentary nature of Sri Lankan history had been bridged by several historians and the majority of them dealt with the political history of the country. Some empirical evidence projected by this historiography, however, can be used to understand the chronological sequence and to identify the patrons of the murals in their historical contexts.

2.2 Archaeological Field work

The history of Archaeological field studies in Sri Lanka goes back to the British Colonial period. During that era H. C. P. Bell who became the first Archaeological Commissioner, undertook valuable initial fieldwork. Photographs, line drawings,

planning notes and sketches of archaeological remains which he found in his excavations in various parts of the country have been elaborately included in his Annual Reports.[26] Today, Bell's reports are the only primary sources revealing the condition of these archaeological ruins some hundred years ago. An archaeologist researching women can gather valuable information from those reports. In Bell's detailed reports on Sigiriya (ASCAR 1895-6), there is a valuable plan illustrating the female figures depicted on the Sigiriya Rock (ASCAR 1897Plate no: XIX). In picture numbers XX-XXVI Bell produced a large number of photographs of images of women (both single and couples). Bell presented an interpretation of the Sigiri frescoes which suggested that the women shown therein depict queens and servants of king Kasyap's harem (ASCAR 1905: 16-17).[27] Bell identified a range of female images: these include guard stones with female figures found at the Manankattiya archaeological site (ASCAR 1892 Plate no: XL); female figures at Jetawana Stupa Ayaka (ASCAR 1894 Plate no: VII); female figures found at the monastery at Kurunegala-Anuradhapura road (ASCAR 1895 Plate no: XII) and figures of goddesses found at the temple near Minneriya Tank (ASCAR 1897 Plate no: XLIV). In using the research reports complied by Bell, one must be careful because at the time the Jetavana and Abhayagiri monasteries were misidentified; but this is easily rectified.

The next important period of archaeological field studies in Sri Lanka comprised the Senatat Paranavitana period. As the Archaeological commissioner, Paranavitana carried forward the archaeological report tradition created by Bell and conducted numerous excavations, making formal reports on his findings. Paranavitan's work at Sigiriya was a turning point in the history of the women's research in Sri Lanka. He spent more than twenty years conducting research here. Ancient people who visited Sigiriya had inscribed graffiti on the mirror wall and he copied, translated and interpreted more than six hundreds of such inscriptions, published in a monumental book named *Sigiri Graffity* (1956) in two volumes. Another of his valuable contributions to Sigiriya was his interpretation of Sigiri frescoes as *Meghalata* (Clouds) and *Vijjulata* (Lightning) (Paranavitana 1961: 1-5). His book *Stupa of Ceylon* (Paranavitana 1946a) was based on

[26] These reports are called as ASCAR reports or **A**rchaeological **S**urvey of **C**eylon **A**nnual **R**eports or Bell Reports

[27] This opinion has been challenged by various researches conducted later

his studies on Sri Lanka stupas becoming the subject of ancient creativity and architectural beneficiations of Sanchi, Bharhut and Amaravati stupa related architecture how they had an impact on Sri Lankan Arts.
Archaeological data uncovered in the course of excavations near the Ruvanveli stupa revealed female figures, including an archaic looking female figure found near southern entrance. Paranavitana's research paper on the ornaments here paved the way in terms of exploring the history of women, providing valuable information about female cults (Paranavitana 1971:140) that existed before this monastic complex. His *Inscriptions of Ceylon* (1970b) and *Epigraphia Zelanica* (1944), which consider inscriptions from all over Sri Lanka, have become important reference sources for those exploring the history of women in Sri Lanka. They cover such topics as queens, women of the royal family and regional leaders like "*Parumakalu*" as well as land tenure, economic strength, political power and the active political participation of women in religious activities.

Among archaeological field studies conserning the portrayal of women an important place is given to work on terra-cotta figurines. The first primary terra-cotta study in Sri Lanka was undertaken by Horcart (ASCAR 1920-21: 09). Terra-cotta found in various sites in Sri Lanka, including Tabbova and Maradanmaduwahave been described by P.E.P. Deraniyagala in his scholarly articles (1950, 1953-1955, 1956, 1957, 1959-1962, 1958, 1961). In 1972, S. U. Deraniyagala had reported on terra-cotta figurines found at Maradanmaduwa. In his master's thesis Jayatilake examined the technological background of the Sri Lankan terra-cottas and their usage (1983). Nandadeva (1990: 225) mapped out 21 archaeological sites mostly in the dry zone of Sri Lanka. For the first time, he classified terra-cottas into nine specific types

The Department of Archaeology of Sri Lanka headed by S. U. Deraniyagala and a Durham University research team headed by Robin Conningham of the United kingdom has conducted research at the ancient citadel of Anuradhapura over a long period of time, and has published work concerning female imagery here (Coningham 1999 and 2006). Graffiti marks like "*Abi Anuradi*" written on a pottery shard, Lakshmi plaques believed to be a type of coins as well as primitive terra-cotta figurines made out of clay can all be interpreted as very important sources belonging to the early historic period.

S. Seneviratne has undertaken pioneering work in interpretative archaeology by combining field archaeological data with literary and other sources. He has developed new approaches by taking a multi-disciplinary approach, combining data from settlement, proto historic and cognitive archaeological techniques. He has argued that the experts need to re-read the history of Sri Lanka through the data supplied by archaeological fieldwork away from main capital cities. He states that by this new approach should inform archaeological research in Sri Lanka (Seneviratne 1984, 1990, 1996 and 2006). The essence of his research points out that inscriptions found in Kottadamuhela and Bowattegala in the eastern province show the power that women wielded, their ability to control resources and the role of powerful women like "*Abi Shavera*" (Seneviratne 1992).

2.3 Religious History

The religious history of Sri Lanka is a popular subject in existing literature. Of particular interest here are studies of Buddhism and its transformations during the late medieval and pre-modern historical contexts. The political instability of late medieval Sri Lanka caused the decline of Buddhism (Holt 1996: 15-40). As discussed in the first chapter, however, the kings of the country during these periods acted as the patrons of Buddhism. The absence of the legitimate higher ordained of Buddhism resulted in the regression of religious practices. The nature of the retrogression and the reformations of Buddhism during this time are theoretically discussed by many scholars in various ways.

There have been attempts to look at Sri Lankan religious history through theoretical perspectives. Holt (1996) draws our attention towards the religio-political background of Sri Lanka in the eighteenth century. His main focus is upon Buddhism, art and politics in the reign of King Kirti Sri Rajasimha (1747-1782). He questions the classical understanding of Buddhism asserted by King Kirti Sri, and the objectives of the King as the patron of religious work. The acceptance and popularity of King Kirti Sri, who was unusual as a Tamil Hindu among Sinhala Teravada Buddhists, stimulates the curiosity of Holt to undertake research about the religious world of King Kirti Sri Rajasinghe. Similarly, the main objective of Holt in raising such theoretical issues conceving the account of Kirti Sri is to understand the conflicts of multi-ethnic societies, including contemporary Sri Lanka.

A number of the temples from which the murals for this study were created under the patronage of Kirti Sri. The religio-political analysis of Holt demonstrates the nature and tendencies of the political context in medieval history. In his scholarship, he questions and discusses the political agenda which was behind the visual liturgy of Kirti Sri. Although he critically examines the literary sources of the period, some interpretations given to paintings show his lack of understanding about the basic elements and techniques of the pre-modern painting tradition. An example is his evaluation of two scenes on a panel of *Uraga Jātaka* at Medawala TV, this shows the cremation of a Brahmin's son and a family meal. Holt claimed that the son's wife observed the cremation.[28] This is a misconception and a misinterpretation of two different events. The woman, who looks on from the side of the cremation, is a female slave and belongs in the next scene. She can be clearly identified by her outer appearance (Figure 2a). Superficially, one could say that a woman observed the funeral, but if we thoroughly understand and analyze the unique characteristics of Kandyan paintings, it can be noted that the Kandyan artists divided scenes by including trees and streams. Accordingly, the artist of the Medawala TV has followed the same principle by including a tree (Figure 2a) in between the young woman and the cremation. Holt has not observed this and he cropped the scene inaccurately (Figure 2b) to build his interpretation (Holt 1996: plate 25) which misleads the readers who have not seen the original painting. His sample used a handful of places in the elite tradition, but extended research is required to understand the socio-religious background of the art of the period throughout the whole country.

The use of literary sources produced by the elite tradition, and Holt's ignorance of folk tradition, limits his understanding about the social background of the murals of the period. Using murals as his main source, without deconstructing them, also negatively affects his conclusion. Holt's hypothesis was that King Kirti Sri could overcome the antagonism of the Sinhales by following his own religio-political agenda. Representations of Amitatapa in *Vessantara Jātaka* on murals in the majority of temples provide a different perspective, however. She thrashes her husband, the Brahmin Jujaka, which may be a symbolic representation of Sinhalese attitudes to Hindus, and this has

[28] Plate 25 depicts the funeral rite as it is being observed by the deceased son's wife (Holt 1996: 76)

not been considered by Holt. In addition, the murals of Medawala TV show Jujaka with the same skin colour as the female servant, and which can be seen as directly reflecting the objections of the Sinhalese towards South India Nayakkar rulers. However, Holt presents an analytical platform to reflect the religio-political view of murals created in mid to late eighteenth century Sri Lanka.

Gombrich and Cone (1977) provide in-depth analysis of *Vessantara Jātaka*, which was the most popular theme of pre-modern paintings of Sri Lanka. They have attempted to explain the great popularity of the story in the Buddhist world and how it was represented in different literature and visual media. They pay special attention to the narration of *Vessantara Jātaka* in Sri Lankan Buddhist paintings. Similarly, they demonstrate how it had been used and treated for religious purposes by different societies. They further discuss the regional variations and different versions of the story and the nature of its historical evaluation. Visual narrations based upon the story were used to evaluate comparatively its socio-religious impact, and they relied on both images and literary sources to discuss the demand for, and popularity of, the story in Buddhist countries. These raise some theoretical questions against the patriarchy projected in the story and question the way in which women were treated by the story and the justice given to them. They use some empirical research to highlight the gender discrimination and hierarchy of the society conveyed in the story.

Malalgoda (1976) draws our attention towards the religious history of the period, which helps us to understand the ways that Buddhism was changed and challenged. The emergence of mural paintings, generally referred to as Kandyan style, is associated with the religious revival of eighteenth century. Understanding the nature of Buddhism in this period, therefore, provides a concrete background to place these arts in their proper context. Malalgoda discusses how the missionary work of colonialism impacted on Sinhalese society and Buddhism. The explanations of Malalgoda on revivals and changes to Buddhism in the up-country and the low-country help to analyse the Buddhist paintings of both regions. He mainly talks about Buddhism in the Kandyan setting while also exploring the emergence and adjustments of Buddhism in other areas. His discussion of Buddhist relationships with south-east Asian countries, such as Burma, casts light on the Burmese influence in medieval mural paintings.

Gombrich and Obesekera (1988) present a detailed discussion about the religious changes of Sri Lanka. They discuss how the cult of non-Buddhist deities combine with the Buddhist pantheon, expanding different cognitive dimensions of Buddhism. This aids the understanding of social ideas and functions of the non-Buddhist cults which will be discussed in the fourth chapter. Chapter six of their book introduces a new aspect of Buddhism, denominated by them as "Protestant Buddhism".[29] This explains to us the religious reformations that mainly occurred in the low-county and helps to understand the religio-cultural base of the murals in the region.

Ranjini Obesekere (2001) launched prolific research on women with special reference to the "*Saddharmaratnāvaliya*" which was written in threenth century by a Sri Lankan Buddhist monk. Obesekere selects twenty six stories out of the whole collection of 360 and her selection is important in my research as these stories have women as the central characters. According to Obesekere, this is a companion volume to more stories which had previously been written by her (1991). She values the stories of "*Saddharmaratnāvaliya*" since these stories offer "insights shifting stances over time on issues of sexuality and gender" (Obesekere 2001: 1) while they shed light on the position of women in early medieval Sri Lanka. The importance of Obesekere's study toward my research is the ability to compare her stories with characters in pre-modern murals. The artists of the time tended to select the subjects from "*Saddharmaratnāvaliya*". Purvarama PV is the most outstanding place where the murals depict a number of stories obtained from the above source[30], and the analysis of Obesekere aids with interpreting the social archaeology of gender in these murals. Obesekere (2001) suggests that these stories were firmly contextualized in the daily life of the author of "*Saddharmaratnāvaliya*". She examined the "*Dhammapadaṭṭhakatāwa"*, the Pali version of "*Saddharmaratnāvaliya*" written in the fifth century comparing how the same story was contextualised differently by the two authors. In that sense, it can be argued that the artist of Purvarama PV has also recontextualized these stories in his visual imagery which leads us to read the

[29] The face of the Buddhism structured and reformed under the protestant influence after British colonialism.

[30] Purvarama PV presents the stories of "*Saddharmaratnāvaliya*" including the story of Patachara, lay devotee Nandiya, the merchant Soreyya, Vishaka, Mahadana and daughters of Mara.

contemporary social norms. The concluding story of Obesekere, for example, conceves the story of Soreyya narrating a story about how a man who commits wrongs was consequently reborn as a woman, and after she performed meritorious acts such as giving, was born again as a man. Obesekere's analysis suggests this was the social ideology of gender at the time. At the same time, she also examines the gender identity, gender relations and attitudes of Buddhist text toward gender and sexuality.

The religious history of Sri Lanka has been studied through different perspectives; the decline of Buddhism in the late medieval and colonial periods, the revival of Buddhism under the patronage of King Kirti Sri and the Buddhist revival movement of Ven. Velivita Sri Saranankara, the reformations of Buddhism, the colonial impact upon Buddhism and the shared-cultural aspects of Buddhism. The intervention of both local and foreign scholars, as well as the flexibility of their research approaches towards the dynamic nature of Buddhism through time and space, is advantageous for the scholarship of the religious history of Sri Lanka. The next section of this chapter discusses one of the important research areas which is expanding our understanding of the profile of women.

2.4 History of Women

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on women in Sri Lanka, Bandarage (1997 and 1998), Coomaraswamy (1990), Jayaweera (1979a, 1979b and 1990), Jayawardena (1986 and 1995), Samarasinghe (2009), Goonatilake (1979), and Malsiri (1979) mostly focused on the twentieth and twenty first centuries related to the political, social, cultural, educational, legal and economic status of women. Only a few attempts have been made to understand the role of women in the early historic, middle historic and late medieval eras. Such work has begun to develop the possibility of reconstructing the profile of women in historical Sri Lanka. Paranavitana (1933), Dewaraja (1981), Kiribamune (1990a) and Munasinghe (2004) secure a prominent place among them. The remainder of this section evaluates existing knowledge of the history of women in Sri Lanka as examined by these authors.

Paranavitana's investigation (1933) on matrilineal descent in the Sinhalese royal family opens a new window on to the invisible power of women in Sri Lankan political history. He suggests that in the royal house of medieval Sri Lanka, the descent was matrilineal,

by analysing the case of King Gajabahu whose blood was traced through his mother and grandmother and King Parakramabahu II. In order to strengthen his argument, Paranavitana draws on some earlier instances of Sri Lankan history combining both archaeological and historical evidence in his scholarship. Examining the special care given to the genealogies of the kings which are embedded in epigraphical evidence of the time, he argues that, in the ninth and tenth centuries of the country, the status of the mother was conclusive proof of the son as a lawful heir to the throne which suggests that 'mother rights' were a recognized institution in medieval Sri Lanka. At the end of his article, he showed the similar status of women in Malabar in South India[31] and finally he recognized the history of the women as an obscure subject which requires further investigations.

In an article published in 1981, Dewaraja investigated the position of women in Buddhism. She notes the gaps in the field of women's history in Sri Lanka at the very beginning of her article and introduces some textual sources in which some clues about Sri Lankan women are given. Though the main focus of the research was to identify the position of women in Buddhism, she generally speaks about the social status of women in different countries, times and religions such as Burma, Hinduism, and the early-historical period. The article therefore lacks focus, and whether the women's roles she identifies are general is questionable. She tries to emphasize the gender egalitarianism of Buddhism towards women in relation to other religions, but the specific social context is not clear to the readers. At the same time, she narrowly discusses different social aspects related to the roles played by women and she briefly talks about the Sri Lankan marriage systems and the status and power of women in the institution.

The history of Sri Lankan women was explored briefly by Kiribamune (1990a). She examines the social identity of women in the ancient and medieval periods. Kiribamune covers the historical phases from third century BCE to the tenth century showing the variability in gender relations and perceived changes in gender patterns throughout the ages. She raises several theoretical questions about the position of women in history. She uses both historical and archaeological data from the early historic periods of Sri

[31] Bechert (1963) examines this aspect in his article entitled *Mother right and succession to the throne in Malabar and Ceylon*

Lanka to explore the behaviour of women within changing historical contexts. A major result of this research paper is that it provides a basic understanding about the historical evolution of women's status in the periods before my research time frame.

Kiribamune (1990b) presents an article entitled Women in pre-modern Sri Lanka, though its content is not compatible with the time frame given in the title. She starts her study narrating an account of the political empowerment of women from the early historic period up to the medieval period. Similarly, Kiribamune describes the religious history focusing on the nature of an order of nuns (*Bhikkhunī* order) and the role of women as patrons to Buddhism with special reference to the periods she detailed concerning the political history of women. Nevertheless, Kiribamune limits the study to the early periods and the account is very useful as it provides empirical data which projects a historical overview of the religio-political scenario of women prior to the time frame of this study. The status of women demonstrated by Kiribamune can be compared with that of pre-modern times in that it reflects their deprived social privileges or achievements.

In a research article, Kiribamune (2000) generally attempts to identify the position of women as depicted in Sri Lankan art forms. She briefly discusses inter-cultural links that shaped the role of Sri Lankan women, women's status in the religious context (particularly female cult worship) and the socio-political status of women. Kiribamune sometimes offers interpretations based upon single pieces of evidence. For instance, she claims that women were kept away from political affairs as depicted in the murals of Degaldoruwa RMV. However, the murals of other temples and contemporary literary sources represent a different story and this is discussed in the section on political empowerment of women in my fifth chapter. She also stresses the necessity of serious study to understand the proper institutional background of women. The general overview suggested by Kiribamune, however, provides a picture of historical women and stimulates our attention towards the women's history of Sri Lanka.

The book entitled *Women in Antiquity* by Munasinghe (1991) attracts a general audience to Sri Lankan history. She briefly considers women in history from the sixth century BC to the sixteenth century. This is a long period which limits the usefulness of the study for understanding the varying profiles of women in different social contexts. In her

approach, narrow definitions generalize the interpretations of all women without considering time and space. Previously, Munasinghe described the religious life of women in ancient Sri Lanka (1985), where she explains Buddhist attitudes towards women and provides a description of the history of the order of nuns. The statistical evidence she retrieved from literary sources demonstrates the glory of the institution and this can be compared with that of pre-modern times which will be discussed in chapter three. Munasinghe's explanation of the religious roles of women and Buddhist ideology regarding womanhood expand our understanding of the religious status of the history of women in Sri Lanka.

Mettananda (1990) examines the social changes in colonial and post-colonial Sri Lanka with special consideration of how these changes influenced women. She uses a wide range of literary sources, both local and foreign, to present her scholarship. In this, the Foreign accounts have been treated as the secondary sources, although the majority were prepared with direct first hand experience; for instance, the accounts of Knox, Davy and D'Oyly, which are recognized as primary literary sources in my research. [32] At the beginning, in short, she describes the passion of women in the organization of family and the contribution of women toeards household economy. Mettananda pays her special attention regarding marriage laws, both traditional and colonial, explanining the assurance privileged by women. Mettananda further explains missionary philosophies towards female education in the country and the colonial impact upon Sri Lankan society up to the modern era. As observed by Mettananda, the educational empowerment of women during the British Colonial period expanded their social spheres. This status has been noticed even in the present study and it is briefly discussed in this theis because of the lack of data in murals on the education of women.

Wimaladharma (2003) carried out his research on the social history of Kandyan women in the seventeenth century. He applies patriarchy as the methodological approach in order to understand the gender relations prevalent during the seventeenth century. He also tests gender theory as a tool of historical analysis. He admits that there was gender discrimination but women experienced a better life in relation to India and western countries, and he has explored a range of both classical and folk literature which tends

[32] See Chapter 3.2

to provide a picture of women's lives. The utilization of local textual sources in his historical analysis uncovers some new areas of woman's lives in seventeenth century Kandy, such as the division of labour, marriage systems, land tenure and the life stages of womanhood. He reviews the literature from the period and tries to show the perception of the comparative society produced in these literatures.

There is a wider body of literature on role of Buddhist women, which mainly discusses the role of nuns in early Buddhist India and the Buddhist attitude towards women (Collett 2006; Kirsch 1985; Walters 1994; Church 1975; Sharma 1977; Boonsue1989; Klein 1994; Salgado 2004; Young 2007; Sponberg 1992; Horner, 1930; Gupta 1990; Richman 1992; Gross 1993; Harris 1997; Andaya 2002 and Kim 2012). The majority of these researches are limited to early historic India and South-east Asia (Paul 1981; Reed 1992 and 1985). Though they are not directly relevant to the position of Sri Lankan pre-modern women, understanding the research approaches and the role of women in previous historical contexts are very useful.

A detailed account of Sri Lankan nuns is provided by Bartholomeusz in her book entitled *Women under the Bo Tree* (1994) and a brief overall picture of nuns in *The Female Mendicants in Buddhist Sri Lanka* (1992). At the beginning of her book, she offers a sufficient description of the history of the Sri Lankan order of nuns which expands understanding of the research on the religious freedom of women in early historic times. The most important aspect of her work is the discussion on the absence of the order of nuns during the nineteenth century. As stated in Bartholomeusz, there were female renunciants[33] called "*upāsikā*" (see Chapter 4.1), although they had not been considered as fully ordained nuns by the contemporary society. This suggests to us that there was an attempt by women in the nineteenth century to regain the freedom they had enjoyed from the early historic period. The mural paintings of pre-modern times also project a very limited view of the religious role of a woman as a nun. In the second part of the book, she draws our attention towards the importance of the woman as a cultural symbol of the national movement of Sri Lanka during the late colonial period. She articulates how women were involved in preaching and were encouraged by the nationalists towards these religious practices. Her declaration provides an opposite idea

[33] Renunciatefrom the material world

about the idea of man: culture women: nature. She hints about a "woman the culture" at the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century. It challenges the western binary concept of "man the culture woman the nature", a notion which had not been practiced in Sri Lanka during the late colonial period. The work of Bartholomeusz can be identified as a comparative study of the female renunciation of Sri Lanka which provides a comprehensive knowledge on the evolution of the nuns' order in the country.

The foregoing attempts at researching the history of women reflect that there had been an urgency to understanding the position of women in the past, and that scholarship generated some dimensions of the religious status of women though the different time periods. At the same time, scholars like Wimaladharma tended to apply theoretical approaches, such as gender, to analyzing the position of historical women, opening a new window for historical research. It is clear, however, that there are still some areas which require thorough examination to uncover the invisible image of women in different times and spaces. Nevertheless the visual representation of women in art is studied by Kiribamune, even though her scholarship is limited to selected artefacts and her interpretations are based on selected primary sources. My research has had to bridge the gap in the history of women, discussing the social notions towards them and the varying profile of women across regions. The next section of this chapter reviews the literature of the research area of art and crafts of Sri Lanka.

2.5 Art and Crafts

Art history is one of the well documented areas of Sri Lankan classical archaeology studied by numerous archaeology scholars and those from other related disciplines particularly as part of nationalist historiography. The contribution of Paranavitana (1946a; 1954; 1970a; 1971and 1972), Devendra (1956) and Wijesekera (1976) in presenting classical sculptured arts is notable among them. Such gigantic monuments as palaces, *Stūpa*, famous monastic architecture and the classical arts of Srigiri frescos were very often subjects of celebration. Bandaranayake (1974), Seneviratna (1983; 1987) and De.Silva (2009) identify these arts as cultural icons of Sri Lankan history. As a result, the primary sources of my research have been highly neglected by historians as they were seen as a primitive arts tradition (Gunasinghe 1978: 1-10). The few records of this tradition were limited to the temples which had been constructed under the

patronage of Kandyan rulers. Dambulla RMV (Seneviratne 1983), Medawala TV (Godakumbura 1964) and Ridi Vihara (Tammita-Delgoda 2006) can all be included in that list. A number of other temples in rural villages beyond the capital and urban cities were discriminated against, not only by historians but also by the government department of archaeology[34], and the story of peasants was untold. As a result, many murals decayed, remaining only in the memories of peasants. The importance of these art forms is that they were created by folk artists for their own people. They were living visual examples of their folk life and unwritten history.

As noted above, classical art history has been popularly used by nationalist historiography, which has also taken on ethnocentric perspectives. Books such as *Sinhalayo* (Paranavitana1970a) *Art of the ancient Sinhalese* (1971) *Sinhalese Monastic Architecture* (Bandaranayake 1974), *Some survivals in Sinhala art* (Coomaraswamy 1906), *Medieval Sinhalese Art* (Coomaraswamy 1908), *Classical Sinhalese sculpture* (Devendra 1956) are examples of this. The involvement of foreign artists and craftsmen, mainly of South Indian origin, and the influence, are clearly visible in Sri Lankan art and architecture. Although Coomarswamy discusses the impact of South India and the cultural diversity of the art heritage of the period, he also tends to refer to his study as *Medieval Sinhalese Art* (Coomaraswamy 1908). Overlooking the dynamic nature of the society is another issue to be discussed in this field. Furthermore, archaeological and historical studies brought to light the ideal societies and emphasized the static nature of the historic cultures. This approach ignores the existence of technological dynamics against time and space and even within the same social contexts. The manifestation of static history generalized the socio-cultural maturity of different social contexts prevalent in the time frame.

The pioneering empirical study, *Medieval Sinhalese Arts,* by the notable scholar Coomaraswamy (1908) projected a descriptive account of arts and crafts. Nevertheless the title of the book was entirely ethnocentric, his multicultural approach toward historical studies underlining the dimensions of the cultural diversity of Sri Lankan heritage. The anthropological and ethnological aspects of the arts and crafts of the

[34] The Government Department of Archaeology published a series of albums which focuses on temple murals. The famous and common place were presented and these are discussed above (see page 41)

period which he presented expand the socio-economic history of Sri Lanka. The traditionalist point of view of Coomaraswamy, however, concealed the dynamic nature of societies beyond the stereotyped cultures he understood. In his thorough survey, he expands the knowledge on the South Indian impact on Sri Lankan arts and crafts by means of craftsmen and styles. This helps future researchers to understand how South Indian culture shaped both Sri Lankan arts and the role of woman. The recording of folk songs in the appendix can be recognized as a great and significant source for studying the role of women, gender-based division of labour and the gender relations of medieval folk societies in Sri Lanka. The historical overview and folk stories, together with a sound description of different craft practices in Kandyan territories, construct a solid base for future research. Likewise, the illustrations of arts and crafts and the people who lived in the period visualize an historical profile. This effectively generated an opportunity for comparison with the social consensuses as projected in murals. Ignorance of folk arts and related intangible heritage has created a vacuum in the social history in Sri Lanka. To a certain extent, Coomaraswamy's attempt was a satisfactory answer to bridging this gap. He provided a reference book conserving both the tangible and intangible heritage of Sri Lanka.

There are several different kind of approaches to the art history of Sri Lanka, Particularly the written sources, which are relevant to this research. Firstly, there are the recordings of murals in the forms of catalogues and albums by different authors and institutions. As they stand as a method of persrving primary data, it provides a good opportunity for contemporary researches to understand past vanished heritage. At the same time, it is belived that recording visual images is very important due to the fragile and rapidly decaying nature of the paintings. These recordings, whihch are outlined below, act as a soplution to overcome some of the limitations of the research which will be discussed in the section of 3.6 of methodology chapter.

Design Elements from Sri Lankan Temple Painting by Manjusri (1977) is considered a seminal, systematic survey of Sri Lankan mural paintings. He caters for both Sinhalese and English readers by presenting this as a bilingual book. There is a brief introduction about the temples he surveyed, in which he mentions the historical evaluation of Sri Lankan painting tradition and traditional artists. An important aspect of his recording is providing the construction year of the temples. Most of his book is dedicated to

presenting the decorative elements of the paintings. Indeed, his line drawings of male and female figures, garments and jewelry undoubtedly merges with my research in the interpretation of the social status of women and foreign influences in the period, providing a comparative picture of these items. Generally, his effort can be identified as a classification of mural paintings presented in a line drawing format. The researchers who tend to use this as a reference book without visiting the temples from which each drawing comes, however, will face serious problems. There are two major methodological or technical issues arising from his survey. The first one is the accuracy of his line drawings. Though Manjusri presents the overall shape of the scenes he selected, he fails to provide correct replicas as accurate representations of the original paintings. For instance in Plate CX (Figure 3b), the scene at the well, *Vessantara Jātaka* at Degaldoruwa RMV, and Plate CXXII, the marriage scene of Amitatapa and Jujaka of *Vessantara Jātaka* at Telwatta RMV he has ignored some minor details of the human figures (compre figure 3a and 3b). Those details are very important for research concerning gender identity. The second issue of his recording is the accuracy of some line drawings. In Plate CV 5 Manjusri (Figure 4b) shows the weeping mother of *Uraga Jātaka* painting of Medawala TV, and she carries a small baby with her. This is an entirely incorrect reproduction by the author. In the original painting or in the story, there is no such infant on the lap of the mother (Figure 4a). This representation of Manjusri misleads the researcher who has not visited the original paintings.

In 1986, Bandaranayake and Jayasinghe published a book in which he records Sri Lankan painting traditions through the ages, together with their traditional background and illustrations of mural paintings. They further discuss the stylistic differences and traditional schools of arts of historical Sri Lanka. This contribution helps the researcher to understand the methods, techniques and basic elements of Sri Lankan traditional paintings. It does not, however, provide any interpretive or critical evaluation on the context and content of these paintings.

In 1990, the government Department of Archaeology published a series of 30 books entitled *Paintings in Sri Lanka*. A variety of temples covering different areas of Sri Lanka were selected for the survey; namely Kataluwa, Karagampitiya, Kelaniya, Kottimbulwala, Gangaramaya, Telwatta, Danagirigala, Dambawa, Dambulla, Devinuwara, Dowa, Paramakanda, Padeniya, Bambaragala, Bihalpola, Bingiriya,

Budugekada, Madawala, Muppane, Mulgirigala, Ridi Vihara, Walalgoda, Samdragiri Vihara, Sasseruwa, Suriyagoda, Hanguranketa, Hindagala and Lankatilaka. This series of books comprises very colourful quality images together with captions and a bilingual introduction, which includes a brief sketch about the history of the temple, structure, themes, and the artists of respective temples. This survey has become a set of primary sources for art historians and those who study these temples. The focus of this survey, however, was on the temples, which were recognized as the creation of the great tradtion, and these are places that were commonly and popularly recorded by art historians.

Gunasinghe published a book on Sri Lankan mural paintings in 1978. He presents this book as a painting album together with a brief description of the plastes selected. He discusses the basic characteristics of the Kandyan painting tradition, with stylustic distinctions between up-country and low-country traditions, in the introduction of the book. He identifies the function of the females who fulfil the decorative purposes of the imagery, as they were created tp relax the mind of the devotees before they appreciate the story included in murals. This promotes the idea of "woman as the object of the gaze" which was highlighted by western feminist critique, and this issue is further discussed in the section 2.6 of this chapter concerning gender approaches in archaeology. Selecting painting from rural village temples, such as Badulla and Monaragal, is an important aspect of Gunasinghe's survey, forcusing the attention of the art historian on the little tradition beyond the great tradition. Temples at Kotasara, Kotagama, Kokunnewa, Mawela, Buddama, Mediliya and Talawa were subjected to study for the first time in his survey.

Schroeder (1992) also follows the same catalogue tradition in his large volume in which he presents the sculptured arts of Sri Lanka from the early historic period to the late medieval period. He also provides a contextual narration and basic details of the selected images for his publication. The most important aspect of this catalogue is the chronological publication history for each and every item displayed in his book. As a result, this catalogue has become a hand book for art historians. The publications made by Danapala (1964), Archer (1957), Gombrich, (1978). Lohuizen-de Leeuw (1981) are also categorized as catalogues that contribute illustrations of murals with brief annotations about the images they include. Most of these catalogues tend to present very

commonly studied and reproduced murals, such as those of Sigiriya, from the middle historic period and late medieval temple paintings.

Gamini Jayasinghe's albums of Sri Lankan paintings (2004; 2006 and 2011) are an attempt at recording the art heritage of Sri Lanka. He presents three separate volumes in which he covers paintings of early historic (*The Grandeur of Sinhala Buddhist Art*), late medieval up-country (*Sri Lankan Buddhist Art, Post-Classical Revival*), and colonial low-country paintings (*Sri Lankan Buddhist Art, Southern Tradition*). He encloses a brief introduction about the basic elements of the painting traditions in each phase. The recording method provided a plan of the shrine and painting registries that demonstrate the structure of murals in temple walls. This provides a useful guide for readers to understand the locational significance of each of the narrative story and to identify original painting by using this as a guide. Presenting the images of cloth paintings from the temples at Dambawa TV and Arattana RMV provides a rare opportunity for the readers to see them, as they are not open to the public very often.

The book on Ridi Vihare by Tammita-Delgoda (2006) marks a comprehensive visual journey of a single temple which represents the eighteenth century art history of Sri Lanka. He describes the history of the temple, and the sculptured art and artists of the temple. Recording the architecture, including the structural elements and monastic plan of the temple, he communicates to readers a detailed understanding of its religious setting. He examines the art and architecture of the temple in comparison with others of the period built by the same patron. He also compares the style of murals of Ridi Vihare with traditional Sri Lankan ivory carvings, providing an explanation to readers about the contemporary crafts which influenced paintings.

The attempt of Ulluvishewa (1994) to describe the basic elements of Kandyan Painting draws our attention to the traditional symbolic base of mural paintings. At the same time he notes the contribution of Kandyan rulers towards Buddhism and Buddhist arts. The book of De Silva (2009) on Sinhalese painting and decorative elements, is a combination of knowledge on Kandyan Painting tradition, since he had gathered together the descriptive accounts of previous studies. He presents his study as a catalogue of line drawings with a brief sketch on classified fields.

The exploration of women in Sri Lankan art by Kiribamune, together with Harsha Seneviratne in 1987, was launched as a digital catalogue of visual images in 2013. It opens up a window into the field of women in art. The authors look at these images under several themes, and the brief description provided for each image helps the researcher to understand the context of the artwork. Focusing their study on selected images still required an extended survey, a comparative cross cultural study and an interpretation.

It is noteworthy that there were some studies about the artist who created arts and crafts of medieval and late colonial Sri Lanka. According to the traditional castes system of feudal Kandyan society, the people of the '*Navandanna*' caste were involved in such art and craft work in the period. The accounts of Coomaraswamy (1908) and John Davy (1821) describe the social status of this caste in the context of the social stratification of Sri Lanka. At the same time, the studies of Codrington (1909), Tilakesiri (1988 and 1994) and Charles (1986) provide details about the traditional craftsmen of the country. In their studies, they discuss traditional craft villages, their unique craft productions, and the lineages of their families. Charles suggests how low-country traditional artists were fetched to the up-country for temple constructions. Tilakasiri's systematic list of the names of the artists helps to understand titles received by the craftsmen, the contribution of women in arts and crafts and matrilineal inheritance of the heritage traditions of the period. Likewise, the names provided by Tilakasiri directly demonstrate the relationship of South Indian craftsmanship and craft families in Sri Lankan craft heritage. He further includes some folk stories and family histories in which there are accounts of royal grants received from the Kandyan King for their skills. Codrington provides an important sketch about the royal artists and the organizations of craftsmen to perform royal service. Unlike others who wrote about craftsmen, he focuses his study on the people of the '*Navandanna'* caste. He describes the traditional villages where craftsmen involved themselves in fulltime crafts for this royal service.

Some British research institutions long involved in the study of Buddhist art have retained a (post-colonial) enthusiasm for studying Sri Lankan art. The Courtauld Institute in London has undertaken numerous art historical research projects about Asian Buddhist arts. Though David Park's specialty is the Medieval art of Europe rather than Buddhist art, he, with Sharon Cather, establsihed wall painting conservation

programmes in the 1980s, and then began working on Buddhist wall painting conservation projects along the Silk Road with the financial support of Hong Kong Chinese foundations. Their work concentrates mainly on the preservation of Chinese and Bhutani art
(https://www.courtauld.ac.uk/people/park-david.shtml and http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/people/cather-sharon.shtml).
In 2012 Park and Cather organized the Buddhist Art Forum, where numerous papers on Buddhist art from East Asian and South-East Asian countries was presented. B. D. Nandadeva, visiting research fellow from the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, presented a paper on *Diversity, Variability, and shared culture: Material and Technological Choices of Non-Traditional BuddhistTemple Painters of Ceylon (AD 1750-1900)*
(http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/researchforum/events/2012/summer/may10_carolinevillers.shtml).This paper focused on techniques employed by artists identified as non-traditional. His scientific analysis and final argument confirm that these artists were not interested in applying the existing Sri Lankan traditional technologies. As they came from a non-traditional and low-country background, they tended to experience materials and techniques from Europeans instead. This is an experimental research project which considers the social and cultural changes that took place during the colonial era and the impact of colonization upon traditional Buddhist temple paintings in the Southern and Western coastal areas. The time frame studied by Nandadeva is similar to my own, as is his focus on the low-country painting tradition of the Southern and Western coastal areas. The appearance of low-country paintings in the time is entirely compatible with European cultural features. The Nandadeva's observations further emphasize how European Colonialism shaped the Sri Lankan culture. He has not yet published the paper. Fortunately, the abstract of his paper has been published on the Courtauld official web site (Ibid). However, he is refining it to publish soon enabling the scholars to examine his scholarship on colonial inspiration in Sri Lankan Buddhist art.

Iconographic approaches have been popularly used in gender archaeology in the western scholarship. The book *Naked Truths: Women, Sexuality, and gender in classical art and archaeology* edited by Koloski-Ostrow and Lyons (1997) is a collection of

comprehensive researches contributed by numerous western scholars towards gender archaeology (Ajootian 1997; Bernal 1997; Bonfante 1997; Cohen 1997; Reilly 1997; Salomon 1997; Synder 1997; Younger 1997). This scholarship examines how gender differences are visually and symbolically incorporated in art forms including wall painting, sculpture, and ceramics around the world (Russell 1998; Joyce 1996; Guillen 1998; Brumfiel 1996; Cabezon 1992). Though these researches are not about the Sri Lankan contexts, the research approach examining the iconographic attribution towards social notions embedded in visual arts, enriches the research percepective to rais similar theoretical questions. The main research question raised in this book is "what is the role of the viewer in constructions of gender in art?" This is a very important question in my research in terms of understanding the rationale in selecting subjects of pre-modern murals, because the artists and patrons of these murals valued highly the participation of devotees in understanding the religious disclosure hidden within. When they project their arts, they often considered the social concept of gender. In an article in this book, Robb (1997: 43-65) explains how gender identity is embedded in visual media. For example breasts as a primary anatomical feature of women. In the same manner, the breasts were indicated as a method of indicating sexual identity in pre-modern murals. She further describes how some weapons, such as swords, were incorporated with male figures as a means of gender identity and to reinforce the power of gender. Similarly, this perspective is evident in the pre-modern murals of Sri Lanka especially in the representation of royal men. The murals of Telwwatta RMV reflect how this view was highly conceptualized in the Sri Lankan context, by illustrating the sword of prince Vessantara who is portrayed as a hermit staying at a forest hermitage even after his renunciation of the throne. Robb's suggestion regarding gender identity using the grave goods associated with the gendered burials is not always applicable in Sri Lankan murals. The tendency identified by Robb is sometimes visible in the stereotyped roles of women in palace scene. However, the association of both men and women with domestic cleaning equipment denies the gendered division of labour. At the same time Robb demonstrates how symbolic representations of the body define the gender identity of her selected visual media, and this can be seen in the depiction of body ornamentation in pre-modern murals. The artists of pre-modern murals did not always

do this, particularly in low-country paintings. Both men and women wear similar ear rings and dresses are made out of same materials.

Studying Gender in Classical Antiquity written by Foxhall (2013) also focuses on gender concepts, mainly in visual art forms, while she examined other archaeological and literary sources in order to build her thesis. She discusses how gender ideologies and hierarchies are embedded in classical arts and she suggests how the different gender aspects cross-culturally shape the human life of Greece and Rome. She focuses on how gender defined the household, space, body and religion according to respective social constructs. In one section she discusses the gender relationships of Greek and Roman households, emphasizing marriage and the household as the key concepts to understanding gender as depicted in classical art. Her gender approach is considered in my research in the sixth chapter, in the section on marriage, which can be seen as a window of understanding gender relationships and gender hierarchy across social contexts in pre-modern times.

It is clear that the iconographic approach possesses a prominent place in the gender archaeology examined in this research. As suggested by Nelson "gendering iconography is a promising avenue into understand the gender of the past" (2007b: 137). A mural (the main primary source of this research) requires iconographic analysis to reveal the position of women. Although there are all kinds of arguments constructed by the western scholarship of iconography, it is not always relevant to my research and the content of the murals informs to decide the nature of the iconographic question to be raised. This research, therefore, will ask a range of questions about ideology in defining the subject matter:

- Who were the patrons and how did they decide upon the intended audience for these murals?
- What was their social and economic status?
- What was the social status of the society at this time?
- What was the artist's role as official painter to the king?

This line of questioning provided an insight to help read the sub-text of these images and enabled the study to develop a narrative of value systems in society, the rights of women and their legitimate position in society.

2.6 Gender Archaeology

Although gender archaeology is an upcoming field within world archaeology, it has not been applied to Sri Lankan archaeology and it is not available in any academic sphere in Sri Lanka. As a vibrant field of archaeology, its origin is marked with the women's movements of the 1960s and 1970 (Nelson 2006: 02). The studies on vanished matriarchy and ancient goddesses were launched while feminist archaeologists were highly criticical about the androcentrism in archaeology (Nelson 2007a: 10-11). As a result, my research is the first study of gender archaeology in Sri Lanka. I have carried out a large amount of field survey and library research in Sri Lanka and South India that has provided me with an important quantity of empirical data. Having this in hand, I pursued avenues for proper guidance in gender related studies with special reference to gender archaeology. These pertain to ancient material culture and social archaeology, which relate to gender issues in antiquity within different cultures and especially in the classical world. There are, however, only a few scholars who have looked at these issues both from an empirical and theoretical perspective around the world and these will enrich my knowledge and broaden my outlook on the gender concept of World archaeology. Scholarship has dealt with many aspects, such as gendering the past and the history of gender archaeology (Walde and Willows 1991; Hays-Gilpin and Whitley 1998; Wylie 1998), gender theories (Duley and Edwards 1986; Gilchrist 1998; Spector 1998; Spencer-Wood 2007), gender roles (Thapar 1963; Ward 1963; Watson and Kennedy 1998; Zihlman 1998), gendered division of labour (Murdock Provost 1973; Sassaman 1998 and Gerstel and Gallagher 2001), gender identity (McCafferty and McCafferty 1998; Joyce 2002 and Sheriff 2004), power of gender and hierarchies (Chen and Bennett 1998; Dommasnes 1998; Levy 2007), gendered landscape (Ashmore 2007), gendered household (Hendon 2007), gender and reproduction (Bentley 1996), and gender and production (Wright 1996). I wish to collate the scholarship of gender archaeology contributed by archaeologists around the world by discussing the most relevant approaches in the field.

Representing the Body edited by Dehejia (1997) addresses several theoretical gender issues in Indian art. Dehejia's article on issues of spectatorship and representation in the

book addresses a series of gender questions[35] whilst critically evaluating the applicability of western feminist critiques in interpreting Indian art. Her main question deals with this critique and the gendered gaze function in Indian art. Challenging the main concentration of first generation feminist scholarship, she disputes the notion "woman is the object of the gaze and the man is the bearer of the gaze" within an Indian context. Dehejia takes in to account the Buddhist art of Bharhut[36] and applies the feminist critique on spectatorship, convincing us on how it misleads interpretations regarding the function of women. As Dehejia demonstrates, the female carvings which adorned the pillars of the railing of the *stūpa* might detect, at first glance, that they were created to enchant male spectators (Dehejia 1997). Researching the patronage and function of these arts, Dehejia argues the inapplicability of feminist scholarship in placing these arts in their proper socio-religious context. Correspondingly, the point highlighted by Dehejia is very important in reading the visual imagery of this study. The intended audience of pre-modern Sri Lankan murals are recognized as the peasants. According to the ethnographic analogy and the literary sources, the active involvement of women as lay devotees is remarkable in a Sri Lankan context too and the wide use of sensual female figures such as *Nāri-latā*[37] can be treated the same as the example of Dehejia.[38] Gunasinghe recognizes these figures were created to please and relax the viewer before they perceive the meaning of religious disclosure hidden in the murals (Gunasinghe 1978). Although Gunasinghe's implication does not go far in feminist scholarship, it also suggests the function of women as an object of pleasure. However, the claim of Gunasinghe can be challenged by the social concepts of auspiciousness and fertility. Dehejia provides a detailed description in support of her argument for the function of women as a symbol of auspiciousness. The examination of the patronage of women towards Buddhist architecture opens an avenue of understanding gender and

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[35] She examines a number of questions, "Has Indian art historical scholarship engendered the art of India? If women and nature are conflated within Indian art? What are the implications for women's status in society? Under what conditions are women a sign for auspiciousness and what limitations does this sign impose on her?" (Dehejia 1997: 1)

[36] *Bharhut stupa* was built about 100 BCE in India and the female figures in sculptured art of this *stūpa* are prominent.

[37] *Nāri-latā* (woman-vine)

[38] see Chapter 4

social hierarchy of art. Dehejia (1992) examines the same aspect in her article entitled *The collective and popular basis of Buddhist patronage*, Wills (1992) and Thapar (1992) also contribute to the same theme. This scholarship is compatible with the early historic Sri Lankan situation where female patronage was prominent. However, the collective patronage of the women of Garakmedilla RMV in the late colonial period, which is examined in my research as a case study, reflects the same circumstance as explained by Dehejia although the two cases are from different periods. Dehejia (1997) also searched for the female artist in Indian art and sought the reasons for their absence and she points out the idea of "anonymous are often meant women".[39] However, this is some what questionable when concerning the pre-modern Sri Lankan murals, as they were a male form of art; nevertheless, the active involvement of women in traditional crafts is prevalent during the time of this study. As a result, it can be questioned as to why there were no female artists who contributed to pre-modern murals of Sri Lanka.

The pioneering work of Conkey and Spector (1984) provides a fertile environment for the field of studying gender archaeology, and has been cited by numerous gender archaeologists[40] and this opened the initial barriers to study in this area. Conkey and Spector recognized various facets of archaeological androcentrism, first, discussing androcentrism in anthropology, illustrating problems in previous studies (Conkey and Spector 1984: 03-05). They point out 'essential' and 'natural' gender characteristics,[41] assumed by previous research which is noticeable even in a Sri Lankan context. Sometimes, the gender dichotomies stated by them were prevalent in some historical societies. As a result, the artists of the time tended to portray such gender characteristics in their visual representations. The metaphors of weaknesses and sensitivity or tenderness of women was highlighted in many places including Medawala TV and this is discussed in both the Chapter 3 and the chapter 4 where the religious freedom of women at the time and the importance of men in social activities are discussed. The approach of Conkey and Spector is very important in this respect because the

[39] Anonymous arts might have been created by women

[40] Nelson (1997), Gilchrist (1999), Wright (1996)

[41] As stated by Conkey and Spector the "males are typically portrayed as stronger, more aggressive, dominant, more active and in general more important than females. Females, in contrast, are presented as weak, passive, and dependant" (Conkey and Spector 1984: 4)

stereotyped gender characteristics cannot be recognized in the murals from all social contexts. The research perspective of my study, therefore, is more unbiased and conservative towards issues which had been generalized in Sri Lankan historiography. Conkey and Spector critically evaluate the notion of assuming sex linkages artefactually[42] while criticizing the rigid sexual division of labour. They recall the feminist critique against the "man-the-hunter" model of human evolution, emphasizing the gender bias of prehistoric archaeological research (Conkey and Spector 1984) and suggest an analytical framework for gender archaeology known as the "task differentiation approach" (Conkey and Spector 1984: 24-25; Spector 1998). Gilchrist, however, identified that the "task differentiation framework is not an archaeological methodology but rather a means of organizing ethnographic data to consider tasks" (Gilchrist 1999:41). The issue pointed out by Conkey and Spector is common in Sri Lankan archaeological interpretations which assume that there was a gendered division of labour in every age and environment. As a result, the traditional historiography presents a static society, and therefore my research is very keen to examine the actual nature beyond the stereotyped division of labour as suggested by Conkey and Spector. Even though this study does not deal with the prehistoric age of Sri Lanka, this approach was very useful for chapter 5.This chapter deals with the division of labour and women's empowerment, in which it explicitly confront the interpretations of the public men and private women[43] and suggests alternative scenarios to the contemporary gender asymmetry of historical literature. Conkey and Spector critically evaluate the androcentric study regarding the portrayal of women in relation to men (Conkey and Spector 1984).

The contribution of Gilchrist (1999) towards the scholarship of gender archaeology secured a significant place in the European context. The glossary enclosed at the beginning of the book is very useful for novice researchers in the field in understanding the theoretical approach presented by Gilchrist. On the other hand, Gilchrist critically

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[42] "Projectile points as male and ceramics as female" (Conkey and Spector 1984: 3-5)

[43] Conkey and Spector show this notion as a major issue of archaeological interpretation. They explain how the archaeological assumptions of how "women are portrayed as performing a very limited number of exclusively domestic tasks, they make pots, and cook and process food. Men, in contrast, carry out a broad range of activities in a variety of cultural domains: weave textiles, use clubhouses, make decisions of public concern, and perform ritual, craft and manufacturing activities" (1984: 11-18)

reviews the evolution of the field of gender archaeology, which had not been incorporated into archaeology, with regard to the major themes and methodological issues in the field over time and in different cultural settings. As with Conkey and Spector, Gilchrist also interrogates the universal gender stereotypes and gendered divisions of labour, experimenting with feminist approaches. Gilchrist discusses the potency of an analogic approach which has been recognized as a recent research trend in archaeology. She demonstrates the effectiveness of both historic and ethnographic analogies in archaeological interpretations as a less problematic method (Gilchrist 1999). Like Gilchrist, the use of an analogic approach in my study helps to bridge the gaps in the fragmentary evidence for women's history in pre-modern Sri Lanka. Folklore and ethno-historic sources produced by the same cultures have been examined in my research, verifying the profile of women as depicted in murals and strengthening the logical analysis. In this respect, for instance, the application of folk songs associated with child care, agriculture and special crafts are noteworthy. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the use of non-contemporaneous ethnographic data of ethnographic analogy, in order to understand the contribution of women towards household subsistence, played a vital role in my research. Gilchrist's discussion about universal gender qualities[44] is taken into account in my research also, particularly in chapter 6, where there is a discussion about the weeping. On some occasions, pre-modern artists also tended to project these universal qualities, such as the tender and sensitive nature of women, by changing the central idea of their subject story.

Gilchrist draws the reader's attention regarding the naturalized images of masculinity, introducing four themes, of which riding/driving is one (Gilchrist 1999). This approach is also considered in chapter 6 in the section concerning women and transportation. In pre-modern Sri Lanka some travelling methods were restricted to women. If some women were fortunate enough to be able to travel, it was prescribed that they should follow gendered postures accepted by society. Gilchrist's detailed evaluation of gendered age and lifecycles also enriches some sections of my research. She argues that middle-aged women normally benefited from greater social recognition and personal

[44] "Men are active, ardent, dominant, aggressive or violent; in contrast females are passive, maternal, gentle, and tender" (Gilchrist 1999: 64)

freedom (Gilchrist 1999). This phenomenon is applicable in a pre-modern Sri Lankan context. In particular, the power and prestige of middle-aged women in comparison to young women is compared in chapters 5 and 6. She stresses that in recent years the paradigm of universal qualities has been abandoned and she recommends being open-minded towards "masculine women and feminine men'' (Gilchrist 1999: 146-8). Primary sources examined in my research sometimes agree with her idea. The involvement of men in child care, cooking and cleaning, which were once universally seen as women's work, are depicted in pre-modern murals, require such a theoretical approach. Gilchrist (1997) thoroughly studied the archaeology of religious women in England in her book *Gender and Material Culture*. The chapters where she explores nunneries in the medieval landscape, the meaning of nunnery architecture and symbolism and seclusion, provide some guidance to examine pre-modern Sri Lankan art forms. Gilchrist's argument on the metaphors of spatial opposites provides a similar approach to the location of the bride in the marriage ceremonies in pre-modern murals which hints at gendered space.

The book edited by Wright *Gender and Archaeology* (1996), provides a useful approach to understanding the gender systems of complex societies. In her article, Wright discusses the use and production of clothes and considers how this is shaped by gender and class. How dress is defined by social class is studied in the section of the present thesis which discusses the division of labour and slavery. The murals of Medawala TV clearly demonstrate the differences in social status of the elites and the female servants, defined by the difference in clothing.

Nelson produced a series of books for the field of gender archaeology,Gender in Archaeology: Analysing Power and Prestige (1997), In Pursuit of Gender: Worldwide Archaeological Approaches (2002), Handbook of Gender in Archaeology (2006), Worlds of Gender: The Archaeology of Women's Lives Around the Globe (2007a), and Women in Antiquity: Theoretical Approaches to Gender and Archaeology (2007b), Nelson (2006) explains the historical evolution of gender archaeology and discusses how feminist scholarship questioned the androcentric interpretations of archaeology. These are mainly feminist critiques about the "man the hunter model" and the absence of women in historical accounts. She also questions the absence of women's studies in early archaeological attempts (2007a). Nelson's book on theoretical approaches (2007b)

provides a conservative research model for gender archaeologists and demonstrates the gender biases of feminist approaches to the field. She discusses the stereotypes of gender attribution and the concept of "women's work" such as cooking and cloth making. These are evident in the literary sources written by European visitors to Sri Lanka, including Knox (1681) and Davy (1821). As discussed in the fifth chapter, they noted that cooking, fetching water and firewood and cattle rearing were women's work. Nelson dedicates a chapter to discussing gender and the division of labour. She demonstrates how androcentric archaeologists limit the role of women solely to that of mothers. This is one of the concepts that is highly challenged in my research. Portrayal in murals clearly suggests that child care was a shared responsibility of both husband and wife, while at the same time placing the role of women in a wide range of activities within the domestic and public spheres. As suggested by Nelson (2007b), there are alternative pictures of women which reflect their involvement beyond the household. Nelson's explanation of households and families, in her sixth chapter (2007b), explains the concepts of matriarchy, matrilineality and matrilocality. The history of Sri Lanka is witness to all these three concepts (Paranavitana 1933 and Bechert 1963). Even though we cannot identify matriarchy during the time frame of the research, as discussed in the first chapter, there were also female rulers during the early historic and medieval periods of Sri Lanka. Matrilinearity is very common in the late medieval period and the political empowerment of women is evident during this time, as discussed in chapters 1 and 5. Although there is no visual evidence for the existence of matrilocality, this, particularly in up-country, is an accepted and popular marriage system traditionally named as "*Binna*" (Peiris 1956 and Peiris 1962). Another relevant theoretical discussion by Nelson in her eighth chapter is 'ideology and gender' (2007b). At the beginning of this chapter she discusses the concept of the mother goddess and looks for the function and intention of female figurines. She draws our attention to the high status of women in Neolithic agricultural cultural societies, such as Catal Huyuk in Turkey. The identification and generalization of female figurines as fertility cults is denied by Nelson (2007b). She criticizes the social idea that "women have flat abdomens except when they are pregnant". However, this notion had been followed by Sri Lankan artists in their visual representations. They normally present the female figure with a flat abdomen unless pregnant, in which case they represent a humped abdomen. This had

been practiced for a long time in Sri Lanka as an aesthetic concept for feminine beauty. Davy presents a document, received from a Kandyan aristocratic, in his book which explains an ideal description of the feminine beauty (Davy 1821: 110-111), and most of Sri Lankan literary sources also tend to present such a portrayal.

The literature review demonstrates that, so far, there has been little discussion about women living in pre-modern Sri Lanka. Although there are some studies of this time period, most have only related to a small number of areas, such as the political history of the period. Far too little attention has been paid to the women of this period and even those studies tended to focus on women depicted in textual sources. Furthermore, those studies have consistently shown a narrow profile, mainly focusing on religious women and have not attained an adequate understanding of social attitudes towards Sri Lankan women. Reading history using textual sources representing the 'great tradition' limits the dimensions of Sri Lankan social history and the general nature of much published research on this issue is problematic. The history of women, therefore, still requires considerable development to understand and define the position of women across the cultures of Sri Lanka.

My research mainly attempts to understand the position of women as depicted in the mural paintings of pre-modern Sri Lanka by studying the murals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. My research question concerns the position attributed to women by society. I have deconstructed these primary sources to understand the hidden role of women and ask some theoretical questions, such as whether there was a gender difference, what was the required and accepted behaviour of women, what roles were played by women, did women act beyond stereotyped roles, and if so where and why and do the murals present a similar or different profile of women compared to the one presented by other sources?

My research focuses on the changes reflected in the institutional background, all of which were influences conditioning the status of women. This was achieved by examining data in a problem-orientated and issue-related perspective. The sources often depict ideal situations, or how the ruling elite wanted society to behave, and I have read "between the lines" (Burk 2001: 34) of the texts and also look for the belittled 'roles' in sculpture and art in order to disclose the real context of women. Iconographic analysis

and social archaeology of gender forms the two main theoretical approaches of this study. Raising theoretical questions with a multi-and interdisciplinary perspective brings to light the concealed picture of women and direct the research to examine how women lived in changing social contexts.

The iconographic and social archaeological approaches to gender are applied as main theatrical perspectives of my research, not as a theory presented by Western and European scholars, but in a way applicable to the Sri Lankan pre-modern context. The existing knowledge contributed by both local and foreign scholars enriches my research and their weaknesses direct me towards new aspects. Though I have not been able to answer all the questions that could be raised in this thesis, this will be a corridor to open different doors in the field of gender archaeology and the history of women in Sri Lanka.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The social archaeological process of reflecting upon the role of woman in pre-modern Sri Lankan history is emphasized through out this chapter. At the beginning, the chapter mainly addresses the murals as the primary sources of the research, illuminating their historical context. In this respect, it characterizes the rudiments of the sources and details the historical context, bringing to light the patrons and artists of the murals. This answers the argument about why these sources were selected as the main evidence in interpreting the role of woman at the time. Accordingly, the next section of the chapter discusses the temporal and spatial research framework, emphasizing the varying profile of women in a cross regional study.

The methodology then presents a critical investigation of supplementary sources to show how they support interpretation of women's roles in society. Subsequently, data retrieval procedures are presented, including the nature of field surveys as the main method of data collection and the use of museum and library surveys. This, therefore, pays attention to the procedure of data classification. The main theoretical approach which is used to arrive at different interpretations is subsequently presented in this section. The final phase of the chapter outlines the problems and limitations of the research.

3.1 Main Sources

The beginnings of systematically built environments in Sri Lanka can be traced back to the early historical period (Bandaranayake 1974: 6)[45] and they continue through the ages, their configurations shaped according to different influences. The image houses, enshrining Buddha's stature as the sacred idol of veneration, secure a prominent place as the typical architectural form of pre-modern times. Remarkably these religious buildings are scattered in most parts of the country representing urban, sub urban and provincial settings.The mural paintings on the walls and ceilings of image houses are generally taken to be decorative, and are the most notable characteristic of this architecture. Although the mural paintings generally appear as a decorative motif, this

[45] Bandaranayake refers this time as Anuradhapura period (Bandarnayake 1974:7)

research considers their value for deciphering coded forms of communication and as a visual language which reflects contemporary social dynamics.

The image house or the *paṭimāghara* (Bandaranayke 1974:27) occupies a pre-eminent position in the ecclesiastical architecture of Sri Lankan cultural history. The history of this architectural tradition dates back to the early historic period and the emergence of three main types of image-house are visible in subsequent periods. In pre-modern times, the presence of these three types demonstrates methods of rural architecture, and the transfer of foreign elements in image houses displays the shared culture of the time.

When we consider the architectural composition of a Buddhist temple, there are components which are common to all: the bodhi tree, stupa, patimaghara and uposathaghara (Bandaranayake 1974). The temple which dedicated to the vinaya (discipline) of Bhikkus contains architecture of different traditions, and key architectural features dating from the earliest times. The temple demonstrates the development of architectural traditions, including the Maha vihara tradition, Pabbata vihara tradition, Padanaghara tradition and finally tradition of the present day (Bandaranayake 1974). The uposathaghara is generally connected to the discipline of monks and is a building meant for offerings while the other three are open to laypeople to make their obeisance. During the pre-modern period, the image house became a focus for obeisance, effectively suppressing the stupa and Boghi tree as religious symbols.

The tradition of the *Gandhakuti* image house constructed during the early historic period and medieval period represent three types of image house traditions as they survive today. The types are traditionally known as *Len Vihāra,*[46] *Tampita Vihāra*[47] and *Prāsāda Vihāra.*[48] Out of these image houses of pre-modern period, the oldest tradition is *Len Vihara* (cave temples). These are dripped ledged caves given to Buddhist monks before the Christian era for them to meditate. In modern times they were surrounded by walls create an image house. These have a close relationship to Kandyan tradition, as

[46] The drip ledged cave sites had been used from early historic periods and were converted into image houses in pre-modern times.

[47] A special type of image house built on piles. Bandaranayake introduces this as a rural architectural tradition (Bandaranayake 1974: 13).

[48] The propagation of this tradition is reported particularly in the low-country. They are rectangular shrines erected on open ground.

the physically mountainous features resemble the Kandyan environment. We come across such image house even in areas like Badulla and Kurunegala which have a close relationship to Kandyan areas. Examples like Varana and Pilikuttuwa show that although in the low-country, people of the area liked to build image houses in caves even in hilly areas of the low-country. There are two types of these image houses which can be found in temples. Within their original natural settings, image houses were built in single caves and in clusters of caves. Nagolla RMV, Dagama RMV, Hindagala RMV and Bambaragala RMV all have image houses in single caves, while Dambulla RMV, Sulunapahura PV, Niyandawane RMV and Ridi Vihara have cave clusters. The natural rock was used to form walls with the other sides built from wattle and daub. Sometimes both side walls utilised the natural rock. In most temples, a verandah would be built in front of the outer wall.

Inside the temple and facing the front door is the main statue of Lord Buddha. Where there is limited height and a long corridor those devotees who wanted to construct a bigger stature had to satisfy themselves by constructing a sleeping Buddha using the length of the cave. Where there are a number of caves, the main cave is used for a bigger sleeping statue and the smaller caves for a seated or standing Buddha. Accommodation is for a table for offering flowers by extendeding a portion of the base of the main statue or by placing a table in front. The image house is adorned with colourful statues which educate the devotees through a visual medium. In the cave temple, apart from the floor and the space reserved for the main statue, the rest of the space is utilized for beautifying the temple. It is a popular tradition to use the ceiling of the cave to draw floral patterns of lotus designs. At a place like Dambulla RMV, which is a colossal creation, even figures of Buddha have been drawn on to the ceiling, as in Ajanta caves in India. Space in the centre of the cave ceiling has been used to depict the defeating of Mara the earth goddess. The wall behind the image house is set apart for Arhat figures and Buddha's halo. One or two bands of figures of deities and lotus flowers set apart depictions of the *Jātaka* stories. They have been drawn in such a way that they could be viewed from left to right or right to left. The lowest strip shows devoted laymen and laywomen holding flowers in their hands or floral designs. The entrance door to the cave temple is made of wood with brass latches and even the door has been painted, both inside and out, with figures of *Nāri-latā* and other floral designs.

In some of the cave temples, a projecting roof protects wall paintings from rain. Hindagala RMV is a good example of such a roof, Where walls have been erected on one side to make a house, they are then decorated with wall paintings, for example at Degaldorwa RMV . Where temples have been built on hill tops, flights of steps are built to aid access for the devotees.

Although built at a later date, TempitaVihara reflect an ancient folk architectural tradition. These temples are also called Dewapita Vihara and they are a special type of image houses in the Kandyan tradition. This is the most common type of image house in Kirunegala District. There is a comparatively small variety of Tempita Vihara, ranging from large temples like Bihalpola PV, some with two storeyed like Dambadeniya RMV. Wattle and daub walls mixed with timber and clay are often found in type of buildings. In order to protect the wooden and clay buildings from rain and pests, the image house is constructed on large wooden beams placed on wooden or stone pillars. Access is by a wooden stair, with or without hand rails. The layout is very simple. The image house is constructed according to Kandyan tradition with a covering roof for only one Buddha statue, often seated Buddha. Behind it is the *Makara Torana*, shrines of gods and images of gods and goddesses. These are bands of paintings, similar to those found in cave temples discussed above. Since these temples are small, paintings are few in number. Only a few essential sections of the selected stories are depicted for the onlooker. Image houses of this tradition are found at MedawalaTV and Suriyagoda RMV in the creation of these image houses. There are examples of image houses made by converting old paddy storage boxes, such as at Udasgiriya PV. In some of the Tempita Vharas in Udasgiriya even the outer wall has been painted, but the lack of proper protection from the rain has damaged the paintings.

Although PrasadaVihara image houses were more popular in the low-country areas, they can be found even in Kandyan areas, where they tend to be later in date and feature low-country style paintings. Their main architectural feature is that they are larger in size. In the low country they are found in very large temples in coastal areas. Main Examples are Sunandarma PV, Dodanduwa RMV, Kumara MV and Samudragiri PV. Architecturally, they can be divided into two main categories, one c has only a room for the image house and the other has a one-roomed image houses with an inner wall and a

circumambient path. Garakmedilla RMV, Kelaniya RMV, Talawa RMV, Uttamarama PV, Vagolla PV, Velikotuwa PV and Asgirigedige RMV come under first category. Inlow-country, there are more complex circumambient pathswith a large, European-style pillars around verandahs which look like a European church. A notable example is Kumara MV. As there was a competition between newly rich Buddhist people of low-country areas and the followers of the Catholic Church, huge temples and churches began to appear and these huge image houses reflect how indigenous architecture was moulded by European features (Malalgoda 1976). The inner walls and ceilings of these one-roomed image houses were widely decorated. In the types with circumambulatory paths, both the inner and outer walls were painted. Having two entrances to the image house, like Purvarama PV, indicates that there were huge crowds who went to worship. Most of the inner rooms of these image houses were adorned with a Buddha statue, Arhat statues, and other patterns while the outer circumambulate path were confined to *jātaka* stories and similar pictures. Above the outer and inner entrances of the image houses the British emblem was displayed.

When we go in to the question of finding accommodation for paintings they have used walls as well as ceilings. A special feature of image houses of this era is that every inch of the image has been used for paintings. As a result, the image houses of the pre-modern period have a rich look unlike those of the early and medieval period. Space behind the statue has always been used for a halo and figures of gods. The painted panels on other walls were used for figures of miscellaneous themes. According to Kandyan tradition, these panels were small, about 10-12 inches high, but larger panels can be seen at Ridivihara, Degaldoruwa RMVand Gangarama RMV. In the later period, Kandyan tradition picture panels became larger. Such temples are found at places like Bambaragala RMV, Asgiri Gedige RMV and Velikotuwa PV. Compared to the low-country tradition, those panels are very large. Generally, as in the low-country, it would not have been necessary to restrict paintings to panels as the image houses are large, and they have had ample space to express their themes. Thus they may have decided to draw bigger pictures.

As stated earlier, the ceiling was set apart for Buddhist themes and floral decorations. On other walls, vertical spaces and panels had been set apart in a certain order.

Uppermost panels are used for Buddha figures, *Suvisivivarana*, *Solosmastana* and divine realms. By doing more meritorious things one could go to higher realms and hence the higher panels were confined to higher themes. About two or three panels in the middle had been reserved for narrative stories, which denoted good and bad deeds, and a large number of religious messages. The lowest panels were meant to depict hells and devotees processing to worship at temples. This shows that the strips have been drawn with a religious philosophy in mind. Bad deeds and anti-social activities leads a person to a very low passion while at ground level one has to indulge in religious activities and learning doctrine to ultimately attain spiritual emancipation. The architectural context of the image house on both walls inside the entrance is very often crowded with people, giving clues about security, custody and patronage of the temple.

The image house is an integral to a Buddhist temple. A devotee first worships the Bodhi tree, and secondly the stupa, and then they enter the image house. They spend more time inside the image house attending to various rites. Having worshipped at the other places, the Buddhists who enter the image house start chanting and worship. Their attention is focused on the main statue. First, they place flowers, oil lamps, incense and fruit drink or tea on the table in front of the stature and chant loudly. Thereafter they sit meditating for some time. Subsequently, they go around, looking and admiring the statues and paintings whether it is their first visit or not. Then they go to the outer chamber and worship. Even after going out to the compound, they leave with a gesture of veneration.

Buddhists visit temples mostly on full moon days. Those who have observed, spend the whole day at the temple while others visit whenever it is convenient to them, mostly in the afternoon. In this way they go to the temple on other *poya* days and occasionally to receive the blessings of the triple gem and for alms-giving on a specified day of the month. As such, temples are not a place visited by people on any day. From the earliest days there was a practice among Buddhists to visit temples on special holy days like Vesak and Pson (see chapter four). There is very valuable folkloric evidence for people going to worship Dambulla RMV in the month of Vesak (May). A Folk song stresses how people were purified and went on pilgrimages. They washed their heads and bathed from Dambulu oya and wore new cloths, they climbed the mountain counting the steps, and worshipped thousands of statues. The folk song further says in an attractive manner

that they must go to Dambulla on Vesak full moon days taking Hinguru flowers from their surrounding area (Wijesuriya and Atambagaskada1984:231-239).

It has been emphasized throughout the thesis that paintings drawn right around the temple have been used to carry religious messages to the illiterate villagers. Temple paintings during this period were used to project as a visual medium to inculcate Buddhist themes. In this respect artists followed a number of rules. They used Buddhist stories as themes which are very familiar to the people by listening to such stories at the temple. Having selected a number of special scenes in a story the artists serialized them in such a manner that the ordinary laypeople understood them. When the weaver sees a series of incidents in a story, he can easily understand the story and he can follow its flow. When they are seen closer to eye level they say "*sadhu*" and other times he may cry because he is living the story. For example the depiction from *Vessantara Jāthaka*, when Brahmin Jujaka was taken away, two small children were donated and thrashed, people invariably cry. At the same time, when they see the figure of Brahmin Jujaka who had been involved in anti-social and bad activities, people become so angry with him that they scratch his face and show other types of ignorance. In order to widen the knowledge of the story, the description of the situation is written below which enhances the knowledge of the viewer. As discussed in the chapter 4, all members of families visit these temples. In this way, they are able to absorb messages conveyed by the stories and be turned away from misdeeds by pictures of hell. Parents show them to their children as a visible less on not to misbehave.

The acknowledged beginnings of the building of image houses in pre-modern times is marked by King Wimala Dharma Suriya (1590 -1604) with the erection of the tooth temple of Kandy.[49] The reign of King Rajasimha II (1635 -1687) became important due to his patronage in renovating Matiyagane RMV with the embellishment of its sculptural art, and granting lands to Kadadora Temple (Abesinghe *et al*. 1977: 47-48). The substantial emergence of image houses as religio-cultural symbols, however, was established under the patronage of Kirti Sri (1746-1781). The revival of Buddhism during this time, due to the alliance of the king with the Venerable Velivita Sri

[49] According to the *Cūlavaṃsa* the tooth temple of Kandy was initially built by King Wimala Dharma Suriya I (Geiger 1992*:* ch. 94-95) and the building was expanded and modified by succeeding rulers.

Saranankara, stimulated the renaissance of art and architecture of pre-modern Sri Lanka. The image houses and their associated architectural features from the time stand as a classical representation for succeeding religious buildings within the country. The intention of King Kirti Sri to establish a Buddhist identity[50] in Sri Lanka resulted in a revival of an art tradition called "Kandyan Art", which typified the social landscape of the time. Religious devotion, insight and the political agenda may have encouraged King Kirti Sri to initiate this visual liturgy[51] at Medawala TV, which has become the typesite of mural painting. He employed his royal artists and craftsmen in the erecting and embellishment of the image house, reflect his ideas of kingship. Subsequently, the artwork of Ridi Vihara, Gangarama RMV, Dambulla RMV and Degaldoruwa RMV was begun and the completion of Degaldoruwa RMV was marked by the succession of King Rajadhi Raja (1782-1798). The contribution of Kirti Sri has been over-estimated by most people and they have tended to credit the patron with the majority of temples (Gunasinghe 1978: 8). The painting tradition had spread in to other localities and was continued by succeeding rulers in subsequent years. It is remarkable that the practice of erecting image-houses was present even throughout the colonial period of Sri Lanka.

There are regional variations and chronological implications in this artistic revival. Even so, the painting tradition of the time was recognized as a single conventional entity due to the basic elements of the paintings. Therefore, this section deals with the rudimentary elements which project the distinctiveness of the art tradition of the time. The walls of the image-houses were mainly embellished with murals, with the wall divided into several horizontal strips[52] which are endowed with a continuous narration[53] on the selected theme. The most notable character of this tradition is two dimensional, and it gives a simple descriptive representation that could be easily understood by devotees and was compatible with the understanding and the religious simplicity of the people. The location of the narrative indicates that an active interaction by the devotees was

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[50] King Kirti Sri was originally a south Indian Hindu king and his desire to consolidate his image as a Buddhist king motivated his patronage of Buddhism (Holt 1996: 15-39)

[51] Holt defines the sculptured art of the image-houses sponsored by King Kirti Sri as a visual liturgy (Holt 1996: 41-72)

[52] This is dependent on the size of the image house. Most commonly three to four strips were maintained by the majority of the temples.

[53] A linear progression from episode to episode (Gunasinghe 1978:12, 16)

expected. Likewise, some natural features, such as trees or streams, were employed to divide the events of a story.[54]

The colour scheme of the murals reveals the use of natural colours[55] available in respective localities, and the application of bright and basic colours is a prominent feature of these murals (Gunasinghe 1978:22-27). The application of colour is occasionally determined by the gender, age, character and social status of the subjects.[56] In order to highlight forms, a dark outline was applied and space in the scene was filled up with traditional decorative motives.[57] Figurative scale was entirely ignored by artists, resulting in similar scales for humans, animals, houses and trees. The name of the story and the event are inscribed in the strips immediately under the scene to broaden the comprehension of the devotees, and this procedure has generated a wealth of historical materials and a key to help identify the content for viewers (Gunasinghe 1978: 16-17).[58]

The *Jātaka* stories[59] hold a prominent place among the themes used in murals of the period (Gunasinghe 1978:9-10), and the moral of the stories was exploited for social reform (appendix 1) The popularity and circulation of the *Jātaka* stories in different temples aided the interpretation and understanding of meanings, which the artist did not make explicit in their visual images and which demonstrated the religio-cultural ideology of society. That the visualization of a number of *Jātaka* stories, particularly the

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[54] Understanding these elements is very important to arrive at interpretations. Subsequent chapters explain how a lack of understanding of the division of scenes by the artist could lead to misinterpretation, for example by Holt (see pages 23-24).

[55] The process of preparing colours and their raw materials is unique, and the traditional art teachings record them on manuscripts. "*Sāyam Sādana Vistaraya*" (the description of making colours), the palm leaf manuscript of University of Peradeniya, presents a detail account of the raw materials and the procedures for making respective colours (manuscript no: 278825, Main Library, University of Peradeniya)

[56] See Chapter 6.

[57] The application of floral designs and composite female figures such as *nāri-latā* (a mythical climbing vine of which the flower has the appearance of a woman) and *kinduranganā* (mythical woman-bird) is very common in murals of the time (Coomaraswamy 1908: 81-94)

[58] The inscription of Asgiri Gedige RMV in the scene of *Vessantara Jātaka* tells that Jujaka, the husband of Amitatapa, gets permission from his wife to leave in order to bring slaves. According to the story and the depiction, it is a traditional departure of a husband and wife. However, the phrase "permission of the wife" enriches the research, demonstrating the power of gender

[59] Cowell, E. B. edits the *Jātaka* stories and publishes a collection of 547 stories in six separate volumes entitled *The Jataka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births*, Vol. I&II (1895), Vol. III (1897) , Vol. IV (1901) , Vol. V (1905) , Vol. VI (1907)

demand for the *Vessantara Jātaka*[60] in most of the temples, is remarkable (Table 1). *Vessantara Jātaka* holds a distinctive position in the arena of the Buddhist art and literature of Sri Lanka by its popularity as the preferred subject matter for centuries (figure 5). It is one of the *Jātaka* stories of *Jātaka pot vahansē* collection, written in the thirteenth century.[61] The patrons and the artists of temple paintings aimed to bring about a change in a society which had practiced immoral and unethical living, not in accordance with Buddhist expectations. They may have realized that their visual representations would be a remedy to eradicate the perceived confusion of Sri Lankan culture. This may have resulted in illustrating this story repeatedly at almost every Buddhist temples in the country. Hence, during the periods above, the story was deeply rooted in the minds of people, making it easy for devotees to perceive the central idea that patrons and artists may have been keen to convey though their art works. It is noticeable that *Vessantara Jātaka* painting was presented more than once in some image houses, for instance, Bihalpola TV and VeligodapolaTV. The other notable factor of the *Vessantara Jātaka* is its presentation of a stereotypical wife as well as a radical wife that enables us to recognize gender characteristics and social ideas relating to wives at the time. Other *Jātaka* stories, for instance *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka, Ksāntivādī Jātaka* and *Tēlapatta Jātaka*, were also popular in murals.

Buddhist stories[62]in murals obtained from religious literature, for instance *Saddarmaratnāvaliya* (Ganavimala 1971), also reflect the social norms of the time. Scenes from the life story of Buddha, also quite a popular theme in the murals and visual representations of these events, demonstrated that they were obtained from *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* or *Pūjāwaliya.*[63] At the same time, historical events of the

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[60] "…the selfless generosity of Vessantara, who gave away everything, even his children and his wife, is the most famous story in the Buddhist world. It has been retold in every Buddhist language, in elegant literature and in popular poetry; it has been represented in the art of every Buddhist country; it has formed the theme of countless sermons, dramas, dances, and ceremonies. In Theravada Buddhist countries, Ceylon and SouthEast Asia, it is still learnt by every child; even the biography of the Buddha is not better known" (Gombrich and Cone, 1977: XV).

[61] *Jātakaṭṭhakatāva* written in Pali translated in to Sinhala as *Jātaka Pot Vahansē* by the king Pandita Parakkramabahu VI in Kurunegala Period (thirteenth century)

[62] The story of Patachara, Nandiya upasaka, Sawreiya situ, and Mahadhana situ were extracted from *Saddharmaratnāvaliya*. These stories were depicted in Purvarama PV, in the low-country.

[63]*Pūjāwaliya* is a Sinhala Buddhist book which describe the story of Buddha written in the threenth century

country, astrological signs, conceptual representation of sin (Hell) and merit (Heaven) and other decorative motifs are also noteworthy. The efficacy of the female figure as a decorative motif is also prominent in this visual language. The rationale of a theme is mainly determined by social tendencies and the artists make sure to select the themes which project the profile of women in both a negative and positive manner. Although mural stories were originally composed in earlier periods, the enthusiasm of the artist in moulding them into their social contexts helps us to read the social history of the time. Therefore, the selection of subject matter in murals was also a consideration in using murals as the main sources of the study.

The main seat of the government is popularly associated with the patronage of the murals of the time and the name of King Kirti Sri was highly praised through his patronage. At the same time, some court officials and regional leaders also contributed towards the creation of murals.[64] It is also notable that some of the murals were patronized by groups which reflected the collective sponsorship of villages. For instance, the artwork of Telwatta RMV[65] is presented as a result of such efforts. Women from elite families also tended to be the patrons of them. In the later part of the colonial period, the emergence of women from different social strata as the patrons of the murals is also noted[66]. The temples that received the royal deeds and grants are called *Raja Maha Vihāra* (RMV), the gereat templs are calle *Maha Vihāra* (MV) and other ancient temples are called *Purāṇa Vihāra* (PV).

The artists of pre-modern mural painting appear to have come from diverse social status groups. Even though the traditional caste system places the painters (*sittaru*) in the caste or guild of artificers of '*Navamdanna*', (Coomaraswamy 1908:54)[67] their social status still differed based on their caste. The royal artists were organized in a special

[64] Migastenne adikarama is recognized as the patron of Wijesundararama RMV and most of the temples in Kurunegala district

[65] The inscription of the doorway of Telwatta RMV mentions that the men and women of the village contributed to the art work of the temple

[66] The role of women as a patron of murals is discussed in the Chapter 4 section 4.2.3

[67] Codrington provides a description of *Navandannō* and their social status (Codrington 1909: 221-253)

association in the palace,[68] and they had an economic status approved in royal grants. The majority of the temple murals, however, were created by artists in their respective villages. Unfortunately, the power and prestige of the authors of the classical historical sources muted the stories of these artists in historical narration, however, the written vouchers, literary sources and inscriptions on the murals, reveal some of the names of the artists and families who lived in this period. Dewaragampola Silvattena, Nilagama Patabendi, Koswatte Naide and Hiriyale Naide were prominent among the artists of up-country paintings (Manjusri 1977:23). The family of Kadolgalle[69]were popular in the low-country, and Kadolgalle Podda sittara, Kadolgalle Mahasittara and Himappu alias Babun[70]were popular artificers also in the low-country. The field survey of this study reveals that an artist from Galkandegama village painted the murals of Dagama RMV and Niyandawane RMV, inscribing his name on the paintings. The social experience of the artist shaped the visual language sometimes tends to change the central idea of the story, and this will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Before examinating the social status of artists in the pre-modern period, their position in society should first be identified. This position has to be understood within the pre-modern caste hierarchy. It is also necessary to understand the pre-modern caste system which existed in Sri Lanka and the service organization which was attached to it. In this task considerable information is provided by archaeological and literary sources.

The main sources of study are artists who were known as "*Sittaru*" or "*Hittaru*" (Codrington, 1909a: 221). They belonged to the "*Navandanna*" caste in the traditional Kandyan Hierarchy (Codrington, 1909a: 221).[71] Although this caste is equated to "*Sittaru*" in contemporary sources regarding, there is differing information on the social status of *Navandanna* caste in the way it has been listed in relation to other castes. In his description of the Sri Lankan caste system, Davy divides the people in to two main

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[68] This organization is named as *koṭṭalbadda* and *paṭṭalhatara.* Coomaraswamy provides a sound description of the artificers (1908: 54-64)

[69] It is believed that the murals of Purvarama PV were painted by the members of this family of artificers (Manjusri 1977: 23)

[70] He represents the family of artificers of Valitara Balapitiya who painted the murals of Sunandarama PV (Manjusri 1977: 23)

[71] "…It derives the name "Navandanno" from the smiths performing new work (nava kam) and renewing old work…" (Codrington, 1909a: 221).

classes. They are *Wiessia Wanse* and *Kshoodra Wanse* (Davy1821: 112-13).Cultivators and shepherds are categorized in the first group and there are twenty-one sub divisions in the second category. *Āchāri*, or craftsmen, were placed in the third rank in relation to other social layers in the second category (Davy1821: 112-113).[72]

Coomaraswamy presents eleven categories[73]of Valentyn's subdivisions of craftsmen caste of Kandyan society as follows (1908: 54):

1. *Ācāri* (blacksmiths)
2. *Baḍallu* (silversmiths)
3. *Vaḍuvō* (carpenters)
4. *Liyana Vaḍuvō* (turners)
5. *Ridi keṭayankārayō* (damasceners)
6. *Etdat keṭayankārayō* (ivory carvers and cabinet makers)
7. *Galvaḍuvō* (stonecutters)
8. *Ratne endrakārayō* (jewelers)
9. *Īvaḍuvō* (arrow makers, lac workers)
10. *Sittaru* (painters)
11. *Lokuruvō* (founders)

Janavamsa, which is a Sri Lankan literary source, without going into such a detailed description, divided craftsmen into two main divisions:

1. *Kaṃburō, Navandanno* or *Ācāri*: *Lokuruvō* (workers in copper, bronze and brass), *Sittaru* (painters), *Svarṇakārayō* (goldsmiths and including also turners and blacksmiths)
2. *Vaḍuvō*: (carpenters, blacksmiths and masons including house builders, agricultural implement makers and arrow makers including lac workers)

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[72] "The *Achari*, which I have placed the third, occupies, according to some, the first rank amongst the low castes. It is composed of silversmiths, blacksmiths, brass-founders, carpenters, turners, lapidaries, sculptors, &c; -who are called general name *Achari*, as masters or teachers of the arts which they profess, such being the meaning of the world" (Davy 1821: 124).

[73] Codrington quite differently divides Kandyan caste system in to nine categories as 1. *Ācāri* or *Gurunnehela* (blacksmiths), 2. *Baḍallu* (gold and silversmiths), 3. *Galgannō* (stone polishers) 4. *Galwaḍuvō* (stone cutters), 5. *Hittaru* or *Sittaru* (painters), 6. *Īwaḍuvō* (lacquerers of arrow and spear shafts and fan handles), 7. *Liyana waḍuvō* (turners of ivory and buffalo horns), 8. *Lokuruvō* (Brass founders) 9. *Waḍuvō* (carpenters) (Codrington, 1909a: 221)

Janawamsa thus absorbed the painters into the primary division. According to *Janavamsa* among the two main division there were no inter-marriages and they did not sit together to have their meals. Accordingly, since *Sittaru* belong to the first division within *Nawandanna* cast, they enjoyed higher social states in the sub division.

Although painters had enjoyed a higher social status within the *Navandanna* caste, in the pre-modern period of Sri Lanka they were not all considered equal. The main factor affecting this position was that best of the higher craftsmen among them was recruited for king's service. There were two departments of crafts men which were responsible for proper royal service for the palace. Among the department of public work *Koṭṭal-badda* (guild of craftsmen)[74] comprised ten sections and there were five artists in it. The painters who belonged to the *Paṭṭalhatara* (the four workshops of royal raftsmen)[75] were the best of the higher craftsmen who worked immediately for the king. On completion of the king's assessment at the end of their services, the king granted them with special deeds, endowments and as a result they were economically sound and enjoyed good aspects. Their connection with the royal service earned them honour and respect from the society. Their social status was so high that the names given to them reflected their service. Personal names and official names reflected status, for example the names given to Kandyan chiefs demonstrated their higher social standing, whilst social consensus was that craftsmen were given ignoble names with inferior social recognition. Craftsmen in the royal service, however, had socially superior names, for instance, the name of "Sri Danta Datu Makaradhwaja Mandawalli Visvakarma Rajakaruna Muhandiram, granted by the supreme Great court in the year 1678 A.D." (Codrington, 1909a: 221), Kirihami Muhandiram, Alitgama Muhandiram and Gannoruve Muhandiramwere names of higher social states recorded amongst numerous royal artists who were treated better . Even their houses were of high value and long-lasting as they were allowed to use good raw materials. Architectural plans of their

[74] *Koṭṭal-badda* consisted of following artificers: 1. seven *Vaḍuvō,* 2. five *Liyana Vaḍuvō* 3. five *Sittaru* 4. fourteen *Īvaḍuvō* 5. fourteen *Atapattu Kārayō* 6. four *Baḍallu* 7. one *Galvaḍuvō* 8. twenty Mul- *ācāri* 9. eight blacksmiths 10. ten Dis*āva* blacksmiths (Codrington 1909a: 227)

[75] *Paṭṭalhatara* consisted of following classes: 1. *Ābharana paṭṭaa* (jewelry workshop) 2. *Oṭunu paṭṭaa* (crown workshop), 3. *Rankaḍu paṭṭaa* (golden sword workshop), 4. *Siṃhāsana paṭṭaa* (lion throne workshop) (Coomaraswamy 1908: 56)

houses were complex and were equal to those of high government officers. The *sannas* and *tudapath*a warded to them can be seen in valuable archaeological sources. These craftsmen were never paid a daily wage (Coomaraswamy 1908: 57). Money, lands and royal attire were presented to these craftsmen when they completed a temple or a religious place had been well described (Codrington 1909a: 248). For instance, the royal *Sannasa*, 1752 A.D. to Abharana Āchariya Loku Muhandirama for painting the image at Gangarama RMV and Kirti Sri's royal grant of an elephant in 1752 A.D. to the royal artists Hulangomuwe Hittara Naide[76]are noteworthy. One important fact that should be mentioned here is that although they were presented with valuable royal attire, they did not get the chance to wear them (Coomaraswamy 1908: 56). At *Nētramaṅgalyya* (the ceremony of setting the eyes) in which the king sometimes did not participate, they were allowed to be dressed in royal attire like kings but elsewhere, these clothes were more memorabilia (Coomaraswamy 1908: 70-75 and Codrington 1909a:248).

When compared with other social layers the *Nawamdanna* caste was treated as second only to the *Govi* (farmers) caste in Kandyan areas. This is the majority caste in Sri Lanka but in the low-country it was still treated as a low caste. Knox mentioned that "next after the degree of Hondrews may be placed Goldsmiths, Blacksmiths, carpenters and Painters who are all of one degree and quality" (Knox 1681: 68). When social privileges were considered, elites or *Govi* cast enjoyed all the privileges but these do not appear to have been enjoyed by *Navandanna* people. For example, they did not enjoy afull religious freedom, but entrance to places of worship. Never the less Devaragampola Silwathtana a novice Buddhist monk who was the chief artist of Degaldoruwa RMV of Kandy (Coomaraswamy 1908: 59), which was the main temples of kings like Kirthi Sri Rajaginghe and Rajadi Rajasinghe, could not obtain the higher ordination which was brought to Sri Lanka, merely because he did not belong to *Govi* cast. At the same time, Codrington notes that "the men of the caste are entitled to wear the cloths below the knees, and the women the *ohoriya* (cloths thrown over one shoulder) but separate from regular cloths…" (Codrington 1909a: 248) and this asserts

[76] " This is the tush of the elephant granted to the Hittara Naide of Hulangomuwaby the Maha Wasala Kirti Sri Raja sinha, born of the pure Solar race, endowed with renown, perfect like a jasmine flower, excellent, the seat of valour possessed of fame and prosperity. in the year of Saka raja 1574, named Angira" (Codrington 1909a: 244)

that they also enjoyed the social privileges of possessed by other elites in the Kandyan territory. Knox also states that the apparel of these craftsmen was no different from elites (Knox:1681:68).According to Codrington, the goldsmiths alone of Kandyans, other than *Vellalas*[77] held slaves (Codrington 1909a: 222). However, there was a distinction in the material of their cloths than those of upper classes' (Codrington 1909a: 248). Likewise, Knox noted that the elites did not eat with these craftsmen (Knox: 1681: 68). This evidence certainly illustrates the difference in social status between upper class and craftsmen.

The painters who were well practiced in the art of painting were known as *Mul-āchāriyā* (foreman) (Coomaraswamy 1908: 54). Similarly artists in Kandyan areas were known as *Nidè* while the women in *Sittara* families were known as *Nāchchirè* (Codrington 1909a: 222). But there are no indications that these women took part in temple paintings. Although Lawrie's Gazetteer lists a number of women of *Sittara* families (Lawrie1898:451), the main sources list only male painters. Women may have been prevented from painting temples due to their position in their society, concepts like "*Killa*" (impurity or menses), the practical difficulties of climbing up walls as well as the existence of social taboos. But in ordinary paintings women may have helped their father, brother or husband as an assistant artist. Women did play a strong and active role in other industries of the *Navandanna* caste like mat weaving, pottery and brass work as assistants or on a full-time basis. In the case of painting, women's contribution was insubstantial or almost absent.

Looking in to the identity of those craftsmen, it is necessary to stress their South Indian origin. According to historical sources there were among them craftsmen who came from South India for service in the royal court (Coomaraswamy1908: 61-62). Another indication of their relationship to South India is the use of Indian names like Rajeswara, Narayana, Dewanarayana and Devendra (Coomaraswamy1908: 61-62; Lawrie 1898).When they were carrying on hereditary craftsmanship, the words, rituals and technical handbooks confirm their south Indian origin (Coomaraswamy 1908: 61). According to Coomaraswamy, however, they were people who had come from India long ago, had married local people and were living as a part of the local society. As a

[77] this is another name for *Govi* caste (farmers)

result they were no longer Indian Hindus but Sinhala Buddhists who had embraced Sri Lankan culture (Coomaraswamy 1908: 61-62). Consequently, they project a local social order more than an Indian social image through their paintings.

In maintaining the craftsmanship, the craftsmen followed traditional methodology, hat is the hereditary knowledge of craft passed from father to son. It is interesting to note that Knox had observed this tradition even in the seventeenth century and notes that,

"…no artificers ever change their trade from generation to generation; but the son is the same as was his father and the daughter marries only to those of the same only to those of the same craft and her portion is such tools as are use and do belong unto the trade the father may give over and above what he pleaseth…" (Knox: 1681:69).
It is not a thing that one learned by mere watching, it need strict discipline and a proper education based on knowledge and talent. When their male children reached the age of six years, they were taken to craft teachers with presents and endowments (Coomaraswamy 1908: 63-64). The first lesson was named "*Vakadeka*" (Coomaraswamy 1908: 65), in which the teacher drew some picture of various shapes on a specially made plank called a "*Yatipuwaruwa"*.[78] The student repeatedly drew over it so that his hand became accustumed to it, and absorbed its principle. Once the student appeared to have absorbed this training, the teacher made the drawing more and more complex taking him forward. In this manner, when the student became well versed in designs such as "*Paturu", "Kathirimala"*, to *"Thiringitalaya"* he become in expert in line drawings and various design (Coomaraswamy 1908: 66). Next the student was taught to draw animal and human figures. Thereafter the training and experience gained by him was used for practical creative work which was the first step in the process. That qualified him to be assigned to finish the simple and minor work of temple craftsmanship, which the teacher was commissioned to complete (Coomaraswamy 1908: 65-67). As a result this study identified many temples where a number of paintings in one image house were clearly completed by a several painters.

The artist who studied under his teacher not only received practical training. He also had to read and understand the classical and academic techniques and methods

[78] "*Yatipuwaruwa* is a wooden drawing board covered with a preparation known as *wadi*…" (Coomaraswamy 1908: 64).

developed over time, as well as theoretical knowledge. The study of such books was compulsory, and so the artists were learned men (Coomaraswamy 1908: 67-68). Similarly, the paintings in the temples, there are many faiths, beliefs and architectural methods which are beyond mere drawing pictures on wall. In addition he has to be equipped with reading, writing, astrology and Mathematics. In temple painting, in addition to drawing, the artist has to learn large number of supportive media of arts and crafts (Coomaraswamy 1908: 67-69). Thename *"Silpācāriyā"*[79] was given to the artist who knew drawing, ivory crafts, wood carving, sculpture and painting (Coomaraswamy 1908: 68). When the students study for a long time in this manner, a close bond between the teacher and the student develops, and when the talents and attitude of the students are evident the teacher sometimes imparted traditional and secret tricks of the crafts to the students. This bond is so close affectionate and honourable that when the student was earning well, he offered them to his teacher (Coomaraswamy1908:68).

It is important to consider why these murals were selected as the main sources for the research. There is a wide body of sources for studying the history of pre-modern Sri Lanka, however, all these materials are creations of individual authors representing a narrow social group. The popularity of this artistic tradition in many areas of the country, and the work of murals by different artists, representing different contemporary social contexts, creates a wealth of sources for the social history of the time.

The content of the murals indirectly provides an ample source of historical evidence by artists to support the idea that the role of women was ignored: in classical historical terms, women can be regarded as a 'subaltern' group. The examination of murals as the main source of this research, therefore, is effectively a way of reading between the lines of the 'great traditions' of the history of Sri Lanka. A number of studies have been conducted on the history of women using textual sources, and this study attempts to present an alternative picture, and one not written in traditional history. The majority of the other sources focus on androcentric political or elite history. But the content of the

[79] Bhuvanekabahu puspadewa Narayana Abisheka Vichitra Chitra Silpacharya Hittara Mulachariya (Codrington 1909a: 241) is an instance who held best of the higher craftsmen positions *Silpacharya* and *Mulachariya*

murals presents women who represent different social strata, helping to reconstruct the social space and landscape of the societies of the time. Likewise, the potential of murals as a visual language responding to social dynamics was also considered in selecting them as the key source.

3.2 Supplementary Sources

It should be emphasized that the way women were depicted in murals is not always entirely representative of contemporary social norms. In that context, it is necessary to know whether the same view was shared by other contemporary authors. This research examines the portrayal of women in history as a comparative study. Three types of supplementary sources were employed here: archaeological, textual and oral. Archaeological sources include carvings and sculpture; textual sources comprised epigraphy and documentary material including both local and foreign written evidence; and in addition the research drew on a wide range of oral historical sources for women's lives in pre-modern Sri Lanka.

Data collected from archives is used as an avenue to understanding what happened in the past, to develop interpretations, build arguments to support those interpretations and answer historical questions. Before retrieving data from the relevant archives to reconstruct the past, it is essential to contextualize them to reveal the hidden realties of history. Therefore re-examining the source with a problem-oriented perspective is the best way of collecting reliable data. Asking theoretical questions about the historical context, classifying the sources and understanding the ideology of the authors, helps to clarify the reliability of these sources. Before we collect data from textual sources it is vitalto evaluate the archive as a source of historical information.

Archaeologists do not depend on single historical sources. The historical incident disclosed by comparable sources can be distinguished as a reliable episode of the past. For instance, "Medawala TV" is one of the archaeological places providing primary data for this research. It is necessary to recognize the patron of this temple before analysing its art forms. The great chronicle *Mahāvaṃsa*, which elaborately describes the socio-political performances of kings, reports that King Kirti Sri Rajasimha had sponsored the building of the image house at Medawala as one of his religious works (Geiger 1992 ch.100 vv.233-234). At the same time "*Medawala Sannasa",* or the

written voucher inscribed on a copper plate (Lawrie 1898: 580-582) by the king, confirms precisely the same historical donation, enabling this evidence to be considered reliable. From this point of view, archives are considered as data which provide support to confirm historical evidence in this research.

Historical sources produced by the great tradition often depict ideal situations, or how the ruling elite wanted the behaviour of society to be. The collection of data from different archives, however, can procure for us an important alternative historical account of the past. One of the advantages of collecting data from archives is the opportunity to obtain a detailed version of the story of women in the period. The primary data for this research were selected to reflect areas of women's life in pre-modern Sri Lanka. Archives belonging to this period offer a detailed narration which is robust enough to fill the lacunae of the social life of women depicted in art forms.

The subsequent paragraphs discuss the limitations of the primary sources and the application of supplementary sources to build a strong profile of women. This shows the issues which arise when using literary sources and how carefully they should be used. There are two types of literary sources that have been used in this research. Local sources are in the form of both prose and verse, and among the literary sources, the *Mahāvaṃsa*[80] had been popularly used in historiography in Sri Lanka. The reliance on *Mahāvaṃsa* in historiography has been discussed in the introductory chapter and the literature review. Even so, *Mahāvaṃsa* provides many historical accounts for the period and they should be carefully and comparatively employed. *Mandārampura Puwata* is also a source of popular tradition and provides an account of political history within the country. It sometimes goes beyond the *Mahāvaṃsa* when explaining some of the social background in the country at the time. This is a rich source when studying eighteenth century Sri Lankan history.*Uḍaraṭa Vitti* describes historical happenings in the up-country, particularly in the Hanguranketa region. It reveals many events which cannot be obtained from any other sources, such as the notes concerning the wet-nurses of the Kandyan royal family. The emergence of the literary tradition of converting the *Jātaka* Stories into poetry was popular in pre-modern times: *Vessantara Jātaka Kāvya* and *Sandakinduru dā Kāvya* are noted among them. The painting registers of the time

[80] The continuation of *Mahāvamsa* was written in the eighteenth century and it is called *Cūlavaṃsa*

sometimes demonstrate that the folk artists preferred this version of the story. As the composition of an anonymous folk poet, *Vessantara Jātaka Kāvya* recasts the incidents in the story according to the perspective of country people. Archival material comes in a variety of formats, and most of the Sri Lankan archives are in the form of manuscripts. The great tradition of creating documents on ola-or palm-leaf (*Corypha umbracalifera*) was a popular practice in Sri Lanka in the time selected for this study. Land rolls (*Lēkam-miṭi*), written vouchers inscribed on a copper plate (*Sannas*), written vouchers written on a palm-leaf (*Tuda-pata*), boundary books (*Kadaim pot*), books of incidents (*Vitti-pot*) and written decrees (*Sīttu*) are outstanding resources within the Sri Lankan archives and are explored in this study.

Foreign sources such as diaries, reports, registers, gazetteers, deeds, maps, plans, drawings, letters and photographs were mainly created by the British and other Europeans. European visitors such as administrators, ship-wrecked mariners, missionaries, civil servants and doctors, who came to Sri Lanka during the colonial era, recorded their experiences and these are explored as foreign archives in order to collect primary data.

As a contemporary researcher, it is essential to become familiar with pre-modern society in order to understand the historiography. Robert Knox's account of Sri Lankan society[81] is a participant's observation, and is considered the first important historical work concerning Ceylon to be written in English. He produced a veritable ethnographic monograph for historians (Peries 1956:267), which provides an incomparable social history of Kandyan women. Knox describes the role of women, their garments, jewelry, marriage customs, laws, rituals, taxes and other details by participating in their way of life (Knox 1681).

The illustrations included in the archives give tremendous support to the reconstruction of the social archaeology of women in the period. Photographs, line drawings, sketches of women and associated representations are very similar to the portrayal of women

[81]Robert Knox was an English trader and sailor. Knox spent nearly 20 years on Ceylon after being taken prisoner in Kandy by King Rajasimha II. He published his experience in his book "*An historical Relation of the Island of Ceylon*" in 1681

depicted in art forms. Examples of this are the line drawings created by John Davy[82] and the sketches of Robert Knox in their books, which help to reconstruct the outer appearance, social behaviour and social stratification of women in the period.

In the same manner, the accounts of John D'Oyly,[83] Copleston,[84] Codner,[85]Lawrie,[86] Selkirk[87] and Sirr[88]provide observations which share some events and social experiences of the time. Another important aspect of archives is that they provide statistical evidence of women's social life in the Kandayn kingdom. D'Oyly reports in his diary that there were 2113 male and female slaves living in Kandy (1835: 80), and Lawrie also gives us figures for the literacy of women who lived in different villages in the central province (1898: 188-189). This kind of statistical data can only be obtained through archives and they certainly help to complete the picture of women's social behaviour.

There are a number of issues with data collection from foreign records, for example the way they recorded Sinhalese proper names was some what different from their original forms. The misunderstanding of historical contexts in some historical sources is also evident. Robert Knox, for example, elaborately describes the social life of Kandyan people in his historical narration at a valid time to observe the social behaviour of the time. He had some misconceptions, however, even in his descriptions (1681: 90). He records that coconut leaf rolls were put in to the pierced ear holes of young girls in order to stretch them out so that they were able to wear wide earrings. Evidence from

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[82] John Davy was a British doctor and amateur chemist. He joined the British Army Medical Department and became Inspector General of Hospitals. He spent a great deal of the time in Ceylon and recorded his first-hand experience in the book "*An Account of the Interior of Ceylon, and of Its Inhabitants: With Travels in that Island*" in 1821

[83] John D'Oyly was a British colonial administrator who also worked as a translator. He learnt Sinhalese and Pali and maintained a very close association with native scholars, monks and officers in terms of understanding the Sri Lankan culture

[84] Reginald Stephen Copleston was the bishop of Calcutta during the late nineteenth century, who explored the Buddhism of Ceylon

[85] James Codner was the late chaplain to the Garrison of Colombo and published two volumes about Ceylon

[86] Archibald Campbell Lawrie was the district judge of Kandy from 1873-1892 and Senior Justice of the Supreme Court of Ceylon

[87] Rev. James Selkirk was a curate resident for nearly thirteen years in Sri Lanka. He provided an account to the Church Missionary Society on operations in the island

[88] Henry Charles Sirr was Deputy Queen's Advocate for the southern circuit in the island of Ceylon

ethnographic analogy, folk songs and folk stories, clearly discloses that palm leaf rolls were used. A reasonable approach in tackling this issue would be to ignore data where inaccuracies can be identified, leaving only valuable and reliable data retrieved from archives. This would certainly provide evidence toenrich the profile of how women were depicted in late medieval and colonial Sri Lanka.

Although the collection of data from archives plays an active role in this study, there is alimitation to such data in the process of historiography. Whilst important, there doubts can arise regarding their reliability when the data of these sources is compared to other sources in the research. As outsiders within Sri Lankan society, some authors have interpreted several incidents inaccurately, and they sometimes try to understand various Oriental socio-cultural activities as primitive behaviour. Reverend Samuel Langdon, the writer of the book "*Punchi Nona*",[89] was highly critical of the enthusiasm of Punchi Nona's mother for Devil ceremonies (1884:41-60). This reflects the fact that some Europeans visited Sri Lanka during the colonial periods with hidden agendas, such as propagating Christianity. In the same story, *Punchi Nona*, the girl's character is highly praised by the author for embracing Christianity, and he suggests that Christianity is the only way of educating women, revealing the prejudice of the author (Langdon 1884: 140-156). Therefore, all the textual sources of missionaries were carefully examined in the study.

Sri Lankan manuscripts were also important sources for the study, but the palaeography, or the ancient writing systems, of these manuscripts creates another issue. Manuscripts were written in an ancient form of Sinhalese. There are no divisions of words visible, and the application of different punctuation marks, joint letters and some other natural mistakes hinders the transcribing and interpreting process. It is necessary to be equipped with a sound knowledge of handling manuscripts and the ability to transcribe them correctly to retrieve the necessary data. Recognizing the author and his social background is required for the interpretation of the data for research, and issues such as the author's motivations, the patronage of the text and the intended audience must be

[89] Rev. Samuel Langdon was a clergyman and educator. He was the first Principal of Galle High School (1876–1879) and wrote the book *Punchi Nona: A Story of Female Education and Village Life in Ceylon* in 1884

explored. If the author is absent or unknown it does not give us anentire picture of the relevant history.

3.3 Time and Spatial Frames of the Study

The traditional period of mural painting is the Kandyan period, and it is popularly known as Kandyan painting (Gunasinghe 1978:1). The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries[90] were selected for the time frame of this study, and this period has been termed pre-modern. The painting tradition of the era was derived from that of late medieval times (thirteenth-forteenth centuries) and it had been nurtured and came to its peak in pre-modern times. These two centuries produced a treasure trove of historical evidence for the socio-religious history of the country. Holt identifies the eighteenth century as late medieval and the period after the sixteenth century as the colonial. Although the Portuguese arrived in Sri Lanka in 1505, this period in the country's history cannot be called 'colonial' because the whole country was not under the power of the Portuguese. Subsequently, the Dutch also had power only in maritime areas and Kandy was still the political capital of the country. This forms the first part of the study time frame. During the second part of the period, Sri Lanka became a crown colony of the British government. The whole study time frame was evidently a period of change. Major cultural impacts on Sri Lankan society, from European colonialism (Dutch and British) and from South India, took place during this time and it shifted the focus of Sri Lankan social history into a new cultural phase which is recognized as a shared culture. In some cases murals which were painted in the first decade of the twentieth century were also included in the study, as this covered the late colonial period. This was a very important time as the nationalist movement used the murals to promote social reform, and the social response towards European culture was depicted. Unfortunately, the exact construction date of all the temples examined in the research is not known. Even so, by using archaeological and literary sources, one is able to list and make a chronological sequence of the temples (see Table 2; Figure 6). In places where the date of the construction of the building was not definite, buildings were dated comparatively using the stylistic similarities of paintings and comparing them with those of temples with

[90] Gunasinghe notes these two centuries as representing the widest popularity of the art tradition (Gunasinghe 1978: 1)

definite dates. The building of temples in the low-country, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, is a notable feature of the time frame as they correspond with the year of the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria. Varied representations of society are prevalent in different regions, and the changing profile of women is amply depicted in the paintings of this period, manifesting the socio-cultural patterns of Sri Lankan history.

The study encompasses different regions of Sri Lanka and represents urban, suburban and provincial settings, which enable us to preserve an accurate and representative picture of the women. This differs from historical accounts of women which treat the country as a single geographical entity with generalised interpretations. There are some background factors necessary for understanding the regions from a cross-regional study, as these regions reflected different social-cultural experiences across the time frame of the study.[91] This study addresses the nature of women's behaviour and highlights the prevalence of parallel, uneven and differentiated traditions of depictions as opposed to linear views applying a blanket view from a single school of art. The social geography of the research is mainly divided into two areas: the up-county and low-county (Figure 1 and 7; Table 3). The up-country is also known as the Kandyan region, this being the geographical entity of the hill capital Kandy and the mountainous areas. The study area includes the districts of Kandy, Matale, Nuwara-Eliya, Kegalle, Ratnapura, Kurunegala and Badulla. Some features of the paintings of Kurunegala, Badulla and Ratnapura in the up-country, however, demonstrate a distinct provincial tradition which differs from the ideal feudal Kandyan society, the illustrations reflect the customs of folk or village artists. As a traditional feudal society with strong South Indian influence the culture of the up-country differs from that of the low-country.The low-country, covering the western and southern coastal areas including the districts of Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Galle, Matara and Hambantota, were also explored to retrieve primary data for the study. A prominent feature of such a cross-regional study of women is that a precedent is set of information regarding the influence of European culture, mainly Dutch and British, and that this influence was more prominent and was significantly portrayed in the paintings of the southern and coastal areas of Sri Lanka. The most

[91]"The emphasis, given gender difference, varies greatly from culture to culture or even in the same culture according to different contexts" (Brumfiel 2007: 04)

symbolic way of understanding locational significance is the way dress is represented in the murals[92].

3.4 Data Collection and Recording Methods

To date, various methodologies have been developed and introduced to retrieve data for interpreting history through archaeological studies. In this research, data have been gathered from one hundred places in Sri Lanka using observational field survey (Figure 7; Appendix 2; Table 3). The field survey was conducted during a period of six months: from July 2012 to January 2013. The methods used for data recording were photography, videography, sketches, line drawing, and recording onto a pro-forma data sheet (Appendix 3).

The photographic data were recorded using a high resolution digital camera. Human figures, mainly the female figures (single and in groups), and images capturing all activities related to men and women, were recorded photographically. The mural paintings of relevant periods are portrayed according to a continuous narration, with important events depicted in a strip line, which enables the viewer to read the story continually. In order to understand the context of women within the story, some of the narrative stories were recorded using a video camera. Both female and male figures were recorded to compare the difference of scales between them, and this will help to provide a further dimension regarding society's perception of women. This data informs the gender perspective aspects of the study.

Line drawings and sketches were made of female figures, and postures, garments and jewelry were replicated through this method. As this is a time-consuming process, these were created as rough sketches and drawings, and the final drawings were produced later with information also taken from the photographs.

It was decided that the best method to adopt for complementary data recording in this investigation was to enter informationon to a pro-forma data record sheet, where all the

[92] It is notable that the garments and jewelry worn by the women in the low-country paintings demonstrate European cultural icons such as gowns, crown, shoes and so on. In contrast, in the up country the women wear south Indian fashions.

required sections had been pre-printed (Appendix 3). This included the following information:

- site name,
- location,
- year of construction/renovation/conservation,
- historical background,
- patronage,
- women as sacred representations,
- artist/families of art representations,
- contribution of women towards creation,
- services rendered by women,
- contributions of women towards special crafts in the area,
- nature of the society,
- previous recordings/studies/research/publications,
- stylistic similarities with other places (architecture, painting, carvings, sculpture),
- stories/beliefs/myths/customs/traditions of women,
- outstanding females in regional/area history
- the nature of the depiction of women in art.

If there were any previous studies on these sites, the references were noted down on a field note book to be studied in the library survey later. Answering these sections enriched the interpretation of the historical background of the women in their respective social contexts.

In order to identify the comparative profile of women in murals, data were also collected through a museum survey. Sri Lankan museums and the British Museum were visited and collections examined to gather information on women. The Sri Lankan museums visited were the National Museum in Colombo, National Museum in Kandy, Sri Dalada Maligawa Museum in Kandy, Senarath Paranavitana Teaching and Research Museum of University of Peradeniya, National Museum in Galle, Maritime Museum in Galle and the Martin Wickramasinghe Folk Museum in Galle. The allocated time for museum survey, from July 2012 to January 2013, was carried out parallel to the field survey.The museum survey in the United Kingdom was conducted in March 2012.

Museum data was gathered on female figures and other accessories, such as women's jewelry, using the same methods as the field survey, including photography, videography, sketches, line drawing and entries on pro-forma data entry sheet (Appendix 4). The data entry sheet recorded information on:

- the name of the object,
- registration number,
- location and context,
- name of the museum/gallery,
- the medium,
- museum description,
- previous recordings/studies/research/publications,
- the nature of the depiction of women in art.

Furthermore, the museum brochures and museum publications in which the relevant antiquities have been studied were consulted to gather empirical data.

A large and growing body of literature has been investigated through a library survey which was divided into two segments: the examination of primary and secondary data. The supplementary sources, such as inscriptional and textual, play a significant role in this study as primary data. The library survey was conducted throughout all three years, and the library survey in Sri Lanka was carried out at the same time as the field survey and museum surveys. It is necessary to mention that the reading of archives prior to the Ph D programme was helpful in setting up background knowledge about the socio-cultural and historical context of the country, and these preparations were very important in saving time. A significant volume of important data is provided by these historical sources and these help to construct a comparatively strong picture of women.

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on Sri Lankan history and areas relevant to this research. These secondary sources were carefully examined during the library survey. The secondary sources were consulted to identify the nature of Sri Lankan society, its art forms, women, colonialism, gender, women in antiquity, the Sri Lankan - South Indian relationship, the Sri Lankan - Portuguese relationship, the Sri Lankan - Dutch relationship, the Sri Lankan - British relationship, the history of Madurei Nayakkars, Victorian culture during late medieval and colonial Sri Lanka, and

theoretical studies of gender issues. These data were not collected during this research programme, however, but have been accumulated during the author's time as a lecturer and researcher in archaeology over nearly ten years. Knowledge of these ethnographic data has enriched the presentation of the role of women and their social history.

3.5 Interpretation and Theoretical Approach

Interpreting the visual representation of pre-modern Sri Lanka is the main aim of this research, and the temple murals have provided the main sources. The murals represent a form of art which considered to be classical archaeological source. Similarly, the majority of the supplementary sources are also taken into consideration in classical archaeology. As a result of this, the study employs iconography as one of the theoretical approaches in investigating the profile of women as depicted by the murals of the time.

"Iconography is that branch of history of art which concerns itself with the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their forms" (Panofsky 1939: 3). The application of iconography in art history plays an important role and the interpretation process was carried out in three main phases: iconographic description, iconographic analysis and iconographic interpretation (Burke 2001:35-36). Initially, this posed a range of questions about the background of each mural. The data sheet record was merged with these questions and, as a result, provided the opportunity to answer whether the artists represented the ideal or real social experiences of the time, or whether the artist reinforced social norms through visual language. Understanding the composition of the artist's mind and hand fills the gap in the history of women in the application of iconographic analysis.

The subject matter is one of the most important areas that can be analyzed in iconography. Questions surrounding the criteria for selecting themes and subject matter, such as the "literary representations of this theme or subject', and how 'is it similar or different from such literary representations?" (D'Alleva, 2005: 26) were raised from this perspective. It is included in pre-iconographic descriptions which direct the research to

inquire why this artist selected this story in his collection.[93] It is essential to find out what were the ideologies of the painter, patron, and intended audience of painting.

The selection of *Uraga Jātaka* in the murals at the Medawala TV also answers the question about the ideology which brings this subject into visual liturgy. This representation undoubtedly fits with the political background of Kandy and the artist fuelled the need of the patron of the temple for political authority. There was an unstable political condition in the Kandyan kingdom and it was facing various outside threats from European colonial powers, which caused thousands of deaths and brought misery to households throughout up-country Sri Lanka. The great chronicle, *Mahāvaṃsa*, describes the attacks of the Dutch in the reign of King Kirti Shi Rajasinghe and how they violated the peaceful lives of Kandyan people (Geiger 1992:ch. 99, vv.111-149). This created an unstable period when many young men became soldiers. The Buddhist painting tradition acted as a social medium to help heal society, and it was evident that artists selected stories which told of the uncertainty of life.

This section addresses relevant questions on the nature of the painted representations of themes or subject, and how these are similar or different from such literary representations. It can sometimes be noted that the order of the incidents in the original story have been changed by the artist. This is seen in villages where the story was very familiar to them, and data analysis reveals that the main ideas of some stories have been changed by the artist. This then projects different perceptions of the rationale of visual representation and leads to some questions. What are the changes to the main theme? What were the events selected or discarded by the artist? How were these changes made? Why did he make these changes? What is the inevitability of doing it and how was it accepted by the society? Answering these questions helps to understand social identity and ideas of respective cultures and provided a level platform to position women in particular social contexts. In the portrayal of *Uraga Jātaka* in Medawala TV, for instance, the main argument of this iconographic analysis is that the artist had sometimes visibly recast the central idea of the story with agender bias. The artist placed women in a less important position than is known to have been the norm of the

[93] The popularity of *Vessantara Jātaka* in murals has been discussed in section 3.3 in the description of themes.

time, and this was accepted by society. Supplementary sources also reveal parallel evidence, demonstrating the social ideology towards stereotyped gender characteristics prevalent in up-country Sri Lankan society in the early part of the eighteenth century.

Since many of the art forms are based on literary sources, it is be easier to apply iconographic analysis and address the meaning of the images in their historical context in order to bring to light women's social history of the period. The most important characteristic of applying iconographic analysis is comparison with textual sources (D'Alleva 2005: 27). The majority of the themes and subject matter depicted by the artists in pre-modern Sri Lanka, recorded in literary sources, were productively utilized in an iconographic perspective in the study. In the process of data analysis, which was the first of its kind, visual representations of the same story were identified. Then the subject matter and the artist's representation were examined. The best example of this is the depiction of *Vessantara Jātaka,* as it was the most common subject popularly used by the artists (Table 1) in both up-and low-countries. Subsequently, similarities and changes were identified. The study then questioned why some artists in some temples tended to present a different appearance to the same story. What was the social force behind this visual representation? Answering these questions provided a picture of the contemporary social ideas which encouraged the artist to define the theme, its contents and its appearance.

Next, this study deals with the iconographic approach to gender archaeology as this aids attempts to understand the portrayal of women of pre-modern Sri Lanka. The main theoretical questions raised in the study concerned how the artist presented the women in his or her visual narrations. In particular it examined whether there were any female artists who contributed to Buddhist mural paintings, but it was noticeable that all the artists of Sri Lankan murals were men. This study explores the different gender aspects that stimulated the aesthetic notions of these male artists. In this respect, the overall form of the visual representation is as they emerged through the hand and mind of a male. How did the artists react to contemporary gender ideology? Did they reinforce existing gender traits such as gender characteristics, identities, relations and hierarchies? Special attention was paid to how they represented the subject matter according to the time and space available, and how they recast the content of the original story through the gender archaeology of time and space. This consequently enriched the study to

allow an understanding of social attitudes towards women in the iconographic representations of the time.

The main aim of this research is to understand the role of women in different social contexts, particularly their position in society. Here, the application of a social archaeological approach was considered suitable for placing women in their proper social contexts. On the other hand, the function of the main sources of the research as a social medium, and as a form of art created by the artist to represent different social contexts, requires the approach of social archaeology to arrive at different interpretations in regards to social attitudes towards women at the time. "Social Archaeology" is one of the sub-disciplines in the field of archaeology, and archaeologists use this approach to reconstruct past societies and social practices in their totality by placing artefacts in a wider social context. It can be defined as an examination from the 'top-down' by focusing on the systems, institutions and social organizations prior to attempting to look at the role of the individual and their actions (Renfrew and Bahn 2008: 177). Social archaeology of gender is applied as an efficient theoretical approach to understanding the meanings and values attributed to gender in different social contexts. As such, it was selected as one of the most suitable approaches to analyzing the profile of women depicted in murals in pre-modern times.

The socio-archaeological background of the murals is that the artists have contextualized their respective stories for their villages in Sri Lanka, although the original stories were from India. The artist invites the intended audience to assume this as their own social reality by moulding the story according to the institutional background of the artist and the viewers. Furthermore, artists sometimes reinforce the social norms of their contemporary societies. Several theoretical questions can be raised to examine these social ideas, reflected in the murals and status of women within this social context. How did the artist specify the social ideas? What are the elements which show the social notions of the time? Did the artist follow the same methods used by former artists or artists who lived in the same period? Did he give the audience a stereotyped social stratification and account of their privileges as reported by textual sources? Did the artist represent ideal situations or challenge them? Raising these kinds of questions provides an opportunity to read social dynamics through time and space. The approach provides the opportunity to recognize some elements stressed by the artist

to mark the distinction between social perception and the legitimate position of women of the time. For example, there is the disparity in garments, jewelry, hair styles, scale, situation, complexion and the performing of services or posture. This is also used as a vehicle for understanding the varying profiles of women according to social stratification. The comparison of their outer appearance, scale, passion, gestures and sometimes colour, illustrate the privileges, limitations, power and prestige of women according to their social status.

The approach of the social archaeology of gender is also helpful in building up the role of women as depicted in murals representing different social backgrounds. The application of cross-cultural and cross-regional comparisons of visual representations provides the opportunity to understand the social ideologies of the respective geographical areas in particular and Sri Lanka in general. Relevant questions included how the artist targeted their intended audience in order to represent varied social ideas; how artists fulfilled the social expectations of each social context; whether there was evidence for female subordination; what was the nature of society, matriarchal or patriarchal; the position of women in the social hierarchy; whether society wanted to establish gender stereotypes; whether there was any evidence for changing stereotypes, and if so, why and how this happened? Deconstruction of the data and placing them on an issue-related platform directed the research to closely examine the social construction of gender identities and relations through material culture. This was an avenue to understanding the social position of women at the time. During the analysis of mural paintings, the following questions were posed: what criteria in this particular society is used to assign individuals to gender categories; what are the meanings and values attributed to gender categories; does this painting reflect any kind of inequalities in power relations between genders; what were the different openings to social activities and privileges and what did men and women do in specific social contexts?

The scale, transposition, postures, gestures, absence of movement or function, the nature of gender roles and the division of labour provide direct suggestions to reconstruct the social archaeology of gender visualized by the artist. Attention then goes to show how the portrayal of women here reflected or shaped the social values in regards to women, it is important to examine the intended audience of these murals to underst and the social consensus behind them because the murals, as a social medium, include messages

in their religious narration. They indirectly taught or demonstrated to the audience how to improve their behaviour. Female figures were widely used for decoration in South Asian art history. The female figure was utilized in different forms in ancient art. The figure of women as a symbol of protection, prosperity and decoration are vividly emphasized among them. This research examines whether the artists of pre-modern times also respected this ideology, or its conversion into the murals of the time and the demand for the female figure as such a symbol, by identifying the value of the female figures in the visual imagery of these artists.

In order to understand the position of women in social contexts, the female figures and their elements were classified into different categories. These respect the different positions held by women (leader, queen, official, servant, skilled labourer, craft woman, dancer, priestess, nun, laywoman, poet), the status in a women's life (motherhood, sisterhood, wife, daughter, widow), the charting of clothes (upper garments, lower garments), and jewelry (crowns, headdresses, earrings, necklaces, bangles, waist pendants, anklet and rings), gestures, postures, and bearings. These classifications help us make interpretations about the social role of women at the time, particularly in understanding theire empowerment.

In this thesis, the institutional background of women has been investigated by investigating the social, religious, economic and political status of women. Primary data was classified and analysed to bring to light the actual nature of women's behaviour in the institutional structure. The nature of women with power and prestige, political leadership and administration were identified in the chaptor of political empowerment of women. The chapter on the economic roles of women focused on the division of labour and the economic freedom of women. Similarly, the chapter on the religious life of women examined the scenes which illustrated the religious practices and associated narrative details. It had been considered that identifying and classifying the scenes of religious practices and their nature, construed the social structure of women. In order to build up strong picture of women who lived pre-modern Sri Lanka, the ideas projected by the classified primary data were compared with supplementary data. Sources often depicted ideal situations or how the ruling elite wanted society to behave. Since this research reads "between the lines" (Burk 2001:34) of the texts and also look for the

hidden evidence in murals, a more nuanced reading of the real social context for women emerged.

3.6 Problems and Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to some areas of Sri Lanka and there are some background reasons for that. There are twenty four modern districts (Figure 1) of which only thirteen, namely Kandy, Matale, Nuwara-Eliya, Kurunegala, Kegalla, Ratnapura, Badulla, Gampaha, Kalutara, Colombo, Galle, Matarara and Hambantota have temples with murals. The lack or absence[94] of temples with pre-modern murals in other districts is one of the reasons for limiting the field survey to selected districts. At the same time, not all the temples in the above districts have been included in the study because of the time constraints of the PhD degree on the one hand and, on the other, the temples in Kandy, Galle and Kurunegala (Table 3) are so densely distributed that they stand as veritable picture galleries projecting a reflection of the society. Those three districts provide a representive sample of up-country, low-country and provincial traditions. So, giving priority to these three districts is not a problem for the main aspects of the research in a cross-regional study.

Initially, this study expected to explore selected South Indian Temples and museums in order to understand impact upon Sri Lankan culture, but the study tour had to be cancelled for practical reasons.[95] As a result, secondary sources, museum catalogues and the artefacts displayed in the British museum[96] were examined instead. Although I had officially gained permission from the Director General of Archaeology in Sri Lanka,[97] I was not allowed to enter some religious places, and on occasion I was not allowed to take photographs. I have excluded some of those places where I did not get the permission to explore the murals, using the previous studies and other data recording

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[94] Buddhist temples in other areas do not have surviving pre modern art work. In the north and eastern provinces Hindu temples or Islamic mosques are most common, with an absence of Buddhist temple

[95] Conflict between South Indian Tamils and Sri Lankans, whose arrival in India in September 2012 created an insecure environment for South Indian field and museum surveys. In addition, sufficient funds were only available to support fieldwork in Sri Lanka

[96] A small number of South Indian artefacts are displayed in the Asian Collection of the British Museum

[97] An official permission letter (permit no: HO/GS/Permit II) was issued by the Director General of Archaeology on 20/07/2012

methods such as sketch drawings instead of photography where I was not allowed to take photographs.

The inadequacy of the conservation programme of the Department of Archaeology in Sri Lanka has resulted in the deterioration of these paintings. Unfortunately, some of the temples have completely lost their heritage, and elsewhere some panels were severely damaged.[98] Moreover, the civil war and the actions of treasure hunters have also considerably damaged the art and architecture of the period, which also considerably reduces the amount of data available for research. Previous records of some places and their photographs were used to compensate for some of these lost data. The modification of some murals with modern paintings, colours and figures has affected the authenticity of murals in some places. On these occasions, the albums, catalogues and plates of previous researches were utilized. In some cases, it was very difficult to recognize the sex of the figures in particular scenes, but the examination of textual sources helped to understand the story and context and overcome this problem.

Nevertheless, the availability of murals in some places, particularly in low-country temples, is enormous. Among the art forms, therefore, the main source of the study was limited to the murals, though other art forms including sculpture and carvings were employed as comparative supplementary data.

Although this study attempts to understand the social archaeology of gender, the areas discussed in the chapters were determined by the information provided by the murals. Therefore, the overall picture projected through this research is not simply an integral representation of the social archaeology of gender at the time. The purpose of this study is to discover the social identify of women as depicted in murals of pre-modern times.

The absence of information identifying the artist, patron and construction year of buildings also raised difficulties. The lack of historical information about many temples and the absence of previous research or recording were problematic in contextualizing the historical data recorded from these temple murals. Comparing the stylistic changes

[98] Not in a condition for using them in research because the scenes cannot be recognized and the details are not visible

of these places against those with well-defined histories and research provided some help in overcoming these limitations.

Chapter 4. Religious Life of Women

In the examination of the position of women in pre-modern Sri Lanka, understanding the nature of religious life of women occupies a significant place. As discussed in the chapter 2, the religious history of Sri Lankan women is the most popular area of research by both Sri Lankan and foreign scholars (for example, Dewaraja 1981; Munasinghe 1985; Gunawardane 1988; Bartholomeusz 1992 and 1994; Kiribamune 1990b; Andaya 2002; R. De Silva 2004). This chapter is mainly concerned with the religious life of women as depicted in pre-modern murals, which have not been discussed and highlighted in Sri Lankan historiography. In this study of the potrayal of women, the importance of this chapter is threefold: first, the primary data comprises the mural paintings which are recognized as a form of religious art that embellished the image houses of Buddhist monastic architecture; second, the subject matter of the murals have mainly Buddhist themes which portray the religious ideology of the society; and third, the establishment of religious life defined the social space occupied by women at the time.

The Sri Lankan pre-modern murals are inextricably associated with Buddhism (Gunasinghe 1978: 1-5). As a result they illuminate Buddhist social notion towards the religious world of women. Likewise, the embodiment of some religious beliefs into the Buddhist pantheon reveals the demand for female cults in these particular social contexts. This chapter, therefore, outlines the dimensions of female religious symbolism produced by a form of art which conveys the perception of women in both Buddhism and its shared religious beliefs.

The main objective of this chapter is to examine the symbolical and sociological approaches to the position of women in the religious context as depicted in mural paintings. Consequently, the first section analyzes the religious roles played by women and the second section defines the nature of religious activities performed by women. This second section is divided into four sub-sections which examine the practices of visiting religious places, alms giving, listening to religious discourse and attending religious festivals. It should be noted here that this chapter discusses only the aforesaid religious practices from a range of activities. The practices discussed here are defined by the availability of visual evidence as depicted in murals. The third section explores

female religious symbolism, discussing the incorporation of female cults in Buddhist murals. This has four sub–sections. The first examines the representation of the earth goddess, and the second demonstrates how the female figure was symbolized as auspicious, mainly focusing on the concept of "goddess Lakshmi". The third sub-section discusses the depiction of Queen Victoria in Buddhist murals in pre-modern Sri Lanka, and the final sub-section defines the function and the symbolism of composite female figures which are simply identified as a decorative mode by art historians (Coomaraswamy 1908, Gunasinghe 1978; Silva 2009). The final part of this chapter provides a balanced look at the social ideology of the religious conscience of women as depicted in the murals of the time.

4.1 Religious Role of Women in Paintings

According to the evidence of both murals and literary sources, a range of roles was played by women in pre-modern in Sri Lanka and most of them will be discussed in the fifth chapter. The main focus of this section is to identify the religious roles performed by women as presented in the pre-modern murals. According to the Buddhist notion, the structural feature of Buddhist social organization is divided in to four congregations. They are:

I Monks (*Bhikkhu*)
II Nuns (*Bhikkunī*)
III Pious laymen (*Upāsaka*)
IV Pious laywomen (*Upāsikā*)

This section mainly focuses on the role of nuns and laywomen in the pre-modern social context. There have been a number of studies of women in Buddhism with special reference to early historic Sri Lanka, discussing areas such as the order of nuns, nunneries, sponsorship and the position of women in Buddhism (Dewaraja 1981; Munasinghe 1985; Gunawardane 1988; Bartholomeusz 1992 and 1994; Bloss 1987; De Silva 2004). These studies suggest that women played a vital role in the well-being of the religious institutions of the country. Accordingly, both archaeological and literary sources establish the fact that the order of nuns was active and influential from the early historic to medieval periods.

It is known that the decline of both orders of monks and nuns was due to some external political threats during the medieval period of Sri Lanka (De Silva 2004: 121). As a result of, thereafter, full ordination of men and women disappeared from Sri Lanka. During the reign of Kirti Sri Rajasimha (eighteenth century), however, the order of monks with the higher ordained was revived in Sri Lanka with the help of Burmese religious relations (Geiger 1992: ch.100 vv.57-62). Nevertheless, none of the literary sources reveal any details about the re-establishment of the order of ordained women (*Bhikkhunī*) at this time. Andaya suggests that the absence of fully ordained women in South-East Asia was a result of societal pressures for population growth (Andaya 2002: 06) In early nineteenth century, however, it can be noted that there were efforts by women to regain the religious status held by early historic Sri Lankan women. For instance, Copleston[99] witnessed the existence of female renunciants (white-robed nuns) in his description of the devotees of the ten obligations or precepts (*Dasasil*) during the late nineteenth century,

> "…The devotee of the Ten Obligations, or "dasasil," is almost a monk. He is as much bound for life as the monk is, wears a special dress, and shaves his head; and is to undertake no other work than meditation, visiting temples, and giving or doing works of mercy. But he may live in a house, though he must occupy a separate room. He renews his vows every poya day. This is the upasaka *par excellence*. There are very few men of this profession, but a considerable number of women, generally old, are to be seen about the temples, especially in Kandy, or on the way to Adam's Peak. They usually carry bowls as if for begging, and their shaven heads and dirty white dresses give them a pathetic appearance; and one who had read the books would naturally suppose them to be nuns. Female mendicants they are; but they have not been admitted to the Community, and therefore are not called "bhikkunis," but only "upasikas." (Copleston 1908: 279).

Copleston's observation is a glimpse of laywomen in white who embraced the Buddhist religious path beyond the laity who lived in the country during the late colonial period, though they had not had the proper ordination. It shows the enthusiasm of women to gain their religious rights within an unsupported socio-religious environment.

As indicated in murals, the memory of the order of nuns still existed in pre-modern society. Though the artists of this period do not directly present anything about a

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[99] Reginald Stephen Copleston was the bishop of Culcutta. He enclosed an account of his observation on female renunciants of Sri Lanka in his book entitled *Buddhism: Primitive and Present in Magadha and in Ceylon* originally published in 1892.

contemporary order of nuns, some historical events of Sri Lanka, which included some characters of nuns, were incorporated into their visual representations. The stories of bringing of the sapling of Bodhi tree to Sri Lanka and the establishment of the order of nuns by Sangamitta, the daughter of the Indian emperor Ashoka (Geiger 1950: ch. 15, vv.19-22), are two of the events depicted. These were subjects of the artists of Dambulla RMV in the up-country and of Sailabimbarama PV in the low-country. Sailabimbarama PV provides a detailed version of the story which illustrates the arrival of Sangamitta and the other nuns on the shore of Sri Lanka by sailing ship; the welcoming of them to the country by King Dewanampiyatissa and a selection of religious events after their arrival (Figure 8a). The physical appearances of these nuns were very similar to those of the monks. If the associated inscription had not included the name of Sangamitta, there would be no difference between the figures of monks and nuns. In that sense, the artist of this temple follows gender neutrality in depicting religious roles. In contrast, the artist of the Dambulla RMV (Figure 8) tended to demonstrate the sex of nuns in his portrayal. He visualizes three nuns in yellow robes, which cover only one shoulder exposing the breast on the side that is not covered. This exposure of the breasts does not indicate that the nuns of the time literally displayed their body, but was a method of symbolizing the gender of nuns, since the appearance of both monk and nuns are very much similar. These nuns are in the gesture of veneration to the Bōdhi tree, and the artist includes a halo to demarcate their spiritual status of these nuns.

The scene of the passing away of Buddha depicted in Samudragiri RMV in the low-country projects gender discrimination in images of monks and nuns. All four Buddhist congregations pay their final homage to the dead body of the Buddha. The nuns are in the seated position whilst the monks are in the standing position. The indication of a halo only given to the monks demonstrates the gender bias of the artist in conveying the spiritual status of Buddhist clergies. The absence of the order of nuns at the time the murals were painted may have led the artist to mark such a gender difference in spiritual status and the spiritual inequality of men and women.

The story of Patachara, which conveys a rare incident of a woman who becomes a nun, was painted by the artist of Purvarama PV (Figure 9a). According to the story, the destitute woman, Patachara had lost her children, husband, and parents, becomes mad and ultimately becomes a Buddhist nun after listening to the doctrine of Buddha. In this

representation, first she is given the necessary robes which she carries on her head, then prepares for her religious status. Finally, she is presented in the form of a nun. Though she had not fully shaven her head, the trimmed hair indicates her renunciation. The yellow robe and her appearance are similar to those of a monk. Interestingly, the shape of the breast is slightly embossed to determine her sex. The question that should be raised here is the social applicability of the story. It can be interpreted in two ways; first, as a reminder or encouragement for women of the solution for their grievance; second, as taken as a consequence of obeying parents. Patachara lost her family because of her disobedience to her parents and by running away with the servant of the house. There is literary evidence from the time of Buddha[100] of edifying examples for women who achieved liberation by becoming a nun as a solution for the problems they faced. Since the order of nuns was not active in the time which the painting created, however, the first argument is not really applicable. Thus, the painting could have been intended to teach young women a social lesson as suggested by the second argument.

In the murals of Navaratnagoda PV, there is a scene of Lord Buddha preaching, flanked by both nuns and monks (figure 9b). An examination of the jacket under the robe (*Ansakaḍa*)[101] of the monk and nuns reveals that they convey a gender concept. In the portrayal, the nuns fully cover their upper body with a long sleeved jacket while the monks have a sleeveless jacket under their robes. This is a good example which demonstrates an attempt by the artist to illustrate gender difference in the garments of monks and nuns. The garment was a tool used by the pre-modern artist to show the gender difference of the body.

It is essential to understand the reasons for the absence of the order of nuns in pre-modern Sri Lanka. De Silva (2004: 120) queries the lost status of women in Buddhism and asks a number of questions which can be summarised as follows. What happened to the order of nun, and were there any attempts to re-establish it in the country? Did women demand their religious rights? Did the society neglect the religious freedom of the women? Why did King Kirti Sri or the Venerable Saranaṃkara, who were the

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[100] The *Thērigāthā*, or the verses of elder nuns (Davids and Norman 1989)

[101] This is a part of the traditional dress of monks and nuns consented by The Buddha in *Cīvarakkhandha, Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga Pāli* (Dammapala 2006)

pioneers of revival of the order of monks, neglect the revival of female renunciation and why did they not import nuns from Burma? What was the rationale behind that? Was there a social force to re-establish the order of nuns? Unfortunately, the literary sources do not give any answers to these questions. According to *Cūlavaṃsa* there were few attempts by the pre-modern kings to re-establish the order of monks. King Wimala Dharma Suriya II, King Rajadhi Raja, and Kirti Sri sent Buddhist missions to Burma and Thailand to accompany ordained monks in order to establish the proper order in Sri Lanka. However, there is no evidence of a request for accompanying nuns from Burma or Thailand. One can question the existence of an order of nuns in Burma and Thailand at the time the Sri Lankan missions arrived in the respective countries. Bartholomeusz shows (1994) that one Sri Lankan elite woman went to Burma at the beginning of twentieth century and became a Buddhist nun there, thus confirming the continuity of the order of nuns in Burma. This again draws our attention in the direction of royal negligence in establishing an order of nuns in Sri Lanka. As stated above, Copleston's observation demonstrates the enthusiasm of contemporary women to adopt white dress and to become Buddist nuns. This is reminiscent of the incident of Queen Anula during the reign of King Devanampiyatissa. According to *Mahāvaṃsa,* Queen Anula and 500 women representing the royal family, with *shaven heads and white dresses,* occupied the *upāsikā vihāra*, anticipating the arrival of nun Sanghamitta to reinstate the proper order of nuns. As a result, the king swiftly took the necessary steps to establish the order of nuns in the country (Geiger 1950: ch.19 vv.05). The accomplishment of the order of nuns in Sri Lanka clearly demonstrates that the religious freedom of women was valued by the political authority. The same dsesire in a pre-modern scenario, obviously indicates that the need and demand of women was neglected by the authority of the time. In that sense, the absence of the order of nuns in pre-modern Sri Lanka is a manifestation of the downgrading of the religious status of the women. The absence of female renunciation consequently created confusion in the mind of the artists in their representations of nuns, and as a result, the artists of different localities followed their own imagination about the appearance of nuns. As discussed at the beginning, the examples of Sailabimbarama PV, Dambulla RMV, Purvarama PV, Samudragiri PV, and Navaratnagoda PV reflect four different methods of depicting a nun: presenting a monk-like figure but labeling it as a nun; indicating the sexual identity, symbolizing the

disparity of spiritual status, and illustrating a difference of garments. Though women persevered in attempts to achieve ordination for women, such as the form of *"Dasasil Māta"* in the late nineteenth century, they were not supported by authority. The depiction of nuns in the murals, however, shows them as a proper order of nuns. This was a symbolic liberation of pre-modern and modern Sri Lankan women.

Upāsikās or the pious laywomen represent the female halves of the gendered pair of Buddhist laity. Generally, the women who observed and performed Buddhist practices were known as *upāsikās*. Significantly, in the early historic Sri Lankan societies, most women, from the royal family to commoners, preferred to bear the title *upāsikā.* Early Brahmi inscriptions of Mihintale witness that the sister of the Great King Dewanampiyatissa's wife, Varunadatta, introduced herself as *upāsikā,* ignoring her royal status. In contrast, the donors from elite social groups of pre-modern Sri Lanka preferred to demonstrate their nobility by including a title such as "aristocratic lady" alongside their names in donative inscriptions. It seems that the feudal social system prevalent during pre-modern Sri Lanka may have encouraged women to maintain their social status more than their religious status. This will be discussed in details in section four of this chapter, on the role of women as a patron to Buddhism. It is essential to emphasize that the title "*upāsikā"* does not refer to the aforesaid female mendicants who introduce themselves as *upāsikās* in nineteenth and twentieth century Sri Lanka. The next section examines the role, religiousity and meritorious deeds of *upāsikā* as laywomen who observed five precepts. Fortunately, both murals and textual sources agree, revealing a vast variety of religious activities in which they were actively involved.

4.2 Women's Religious Practices

In order to understand the role of the laywoman who searches for the religious liberation, the meritorious deeds conducted by women as depicted in murals are identified below. This information is compared and contrasted with information from other primary sources in a comparative study. Consequently, questioning the social and gender hierarchy in religious circumstances in such religious practices helps to reveal the hidden role of laywomen.

4.2.1 Visiting Religious Places

For centuries, visiting religious places was one of the religious habits of the Buddhist laity in Sri Lanka. The existence of this practice and the participation of pre-modern women in such pilgrimages were remarked on by several foreign visitors,

> "His great Festival is in the Month of March at their New-years Tide. The Places where he is commemorated are two, not Temples, but the one a Mountain and the other a Tree; either to the one or the other, they at this time go with Wives and Children, for Dignity and Merit one being esteemed equal with the other…"(Knox 1681: 82).
>
> "The people of this land count it meritorious to go and worship the impression; and generally about their new year, which is in March, they men women, and children, go up this vast and high mountain to worship…"(Cordiner 1807:24)
>
> "The party of pilgrims that had just arrived consisted of several men and women, all native Singalese of the interior, neatly dressed in clean clothes..." (Davy 821: 345).

The accounts of Knox, Cordiner and Davy demonstrate to us that Kandyan women who lived in the later part of the seventeenth century and early nineteenth century were privileged to visit two of the most sacred religious places, such as Adam's Peak and *Jaya Srī Maha Bōdhi* in Anuradhapura. At the same time, one of the objectives of men in pilgrimages was to gain dignity as noted by Knox. It meant that providing religious freedom for women was considered as a symbol of male dignity in pre-modern society.

Selkirk gives us a picture of the order with an account of families visiting religious places,

> "Whenever, a number of persons go to temple to present offerings, they arrange the order of proceeding before they arrive at the door of the compound, or enclosed ground on which the temple stands. If the party consists of a family of persons, the wife walks first, followed by her daughters according to seniority, and then the husband and sons in the same order, while the rear is brought up by the servants bearing talpats, which they bring to shade their master and mistress from the rays of the sun, or from rain. Each individual holds his or her hands, with flowers, &c., as offering, on the top of the head, in the attitude of worship, and they walk with all the gravity and decorum imaginable," (Selkirk 1844: 111).

The importance of this description is that it confirms the practice of family visits to religious places as had been practiced during the early nineteenth century. It also demonstrates two aspects of gender and social relations.

First, the order of entering a religious place was led by women. In a scene of a royal family worshiping at a Buddhist stupa in Dambulla RMV also depicts the queen standing ahead of the king. One can argue that this is a symbolic representation of gender hierarchy prevalent at the time. by using the position of women in the order of worship. Would it be possible to suggest this as a sign of the powerful women who took priority to be seated in front? According to the universal gender characteristics, women were considered as dependant and to be protected by men (Gilchrist 1999). The description of Knox on marriages of the country gives us a similar account about the walking order and a stereotyped gender notion of the respective society,

> "The next day having dined he taketh his *Bride* and departeth home with her, putting her before him, and he following her, with some of her Friends to Conduct her. For it is the constant Custom and Fashion in this Land for the Husband to follow his Wife. The reason whereof is a Tradition among them, that a Man once going foremost, it happened that his Wife was stolen away, and he not aware of it…" (Knox 1681: 92).

As suggested by Knox women were placed before men to ensure their protection. Was this a practice of Kandyan society, to provide a proper guard and protection for women? The scenes in murals of travelling by foot for non-religious visits also support this notion of placing women before men (see the discussion of travelling methods used by men in the sixth chapter). In that sense, the placing of women before men at religious places indicates the existence of stereotypical gender characteristics in society.

The second demonstration of gender and social relations is the participation of servants as described in Selkirk's account. This directly suggests that they attend to provide shade for their masters and not to gain good deeds for themselves. Similarly, as discussed in the next section, the visual representation of the story of Sujata's alms-giving indicates that the participation of female servants in religious visits was not to obtain merit for their own sake, but to perform services for their mistress. It can be suggested then, that women of the time were allowed to visit religious places but the female servants of the elite houses had a restriction towards their religious freedom.

A painting in Gangarama RMV and Dewagiri RMV shows a row of men and women bringing flower vases in their hands on a journey to visit the Buddha (Figure 10a-b). In contrast to Selkirk's account, the group is led by a group of men followed by women. It is noted that all the women are adorned with elegant garments and jewellery. The men

and women are in their finest apparel, showing their royalty even within a religious sphere. In Gangarama RMV depiction, the headdresses of these women are very similar to south Indian Nayakkar jewelry and it may reflect the artist's experience of the contemporary royals of Kandy. It is noteworthy, in relation to the detailed description of *Cūlavaṃsa* regarding the meritorious acts of the queens of King Vijaya Rajasimha of Kandy (Geiger 1992: ch. 98, vv. 1-20), which emphasises the religious conscience of queens of Hindu origin who later embraced Buddhism. This over-emphasized desceiption about queens by the author of *Cūlavaṃsa* may have undoubtedly influenced the royal artist of the king who was invited to write the *Cūlavaṃsa*. As a result, the portrayal of a group of women who are visiting Buddha has taken the shape of the queens of the king who was the patron of the temple.[102]

Some low-country temples such as Ranvella PV and Sailabimbarama PV also tend to visualize the worshipping of the Buddha by Visaka, the famous female role model of a laywoman and a female patron. The question that should be raised here is why did the artists introduce such subjects in their portrayals particularly in low-country paintings? The religio-cultural environment of the low-country had been rapidly changed by European colonialism. The missionaries brought the low-country Buddhists into Christianity, reducing the traditional followers and patrons (Malalgod 1976; Gombrich and Obesekera 1988). Women were recognized as a cultural symbol of the nationalist movement in the late colonial period (Bartholomeusz 1994). Including instances of women in religious visits in the image houses may have encouraged contemporary women in the participation of such practices. This argument can be strengthened by considering the function of murals as a medium of social reformation which was an easier and effective vehicle for addressing contemporary women.

4.2.2 Alms Giving or Dāna

Giving, or *dāna*, was one of the acts performed by pre modern Buddhists for the acquisition of merits. Both murals and texts provide ample evidence which amplify the generosity of women as a daily habit. As stated by Andaya, "although the wealthy

[102] King Kirti Sri was the patron of Gangarama RMV (Geiger 1992: ch.100 vv.183-204) and invited the Ven. Tibbatuvave Siddharta to continue the *Cūlavaṃsa* as a continuation of *Mahāvaṃsa* the great chronicle of Sri Lanka (Geiger 1992: ch. 99 vv.81-84)

always enjoyed advantages in the display of *dāna*, all women, regardless of social status, could become participants in the merit-making cycle" (Andaya 2002: 15) The most common religious action of women is to maintain a pot of rice known as he"*Pin Hāl*" or charitable rice, where a handful of rice is collected daily when they get ready to prepare the daily meal. Though this concept was noted by foreign writers such as Knox (1681:86) and Copleston (1904: 241), they confuse it with "*Miti Hāl*" which is thrift of women. It is interesting to note that women practiced giving as a habit of their daily lives in pre-modern times,

> "…one of them generally a woman, brings a ladle full of rice,or of gruel and pours it into his bowl, or lays in the bowl a few plantains, or a piece of fish… Having offered it, the woman, if she is a careful Buddhist, makes a low homage or curtsy, herself sitting down and holding up the clasped hands above her head…" (Copleston 1908:263);
>
> "I have often observed a woman place her gift in the bowl with an air of utter indifference, if not contempt, turning away entirely without reverence. And sometimes a woman may be seen, especially in a fruit-shop, where monks, of course, expect to get something, picking out from her bunch of plantains, not the best nor yet the worst, but such as represents a due balance between thrift and religion…" (Copleston 1908:263).

As quoted above, Copleston mentions several examples which reflect the giving habit of women. The most important point he makes is that it demonstrates women having both a giving habit and management skills.

> "For this God above all other, they seem to have an high respect and Devotion; as will appear by this that follows. Ladies and Gentlewomen of good Quality, will sometimes in a Fit of Devotion to the Buddou, go a begging for him. The greatest Ladies of all do not indeed go themselves, but send their Maids dressed up finely in their stead. These Women taking the Image along with them, carry it upon the palms of their hand covered with a piece of white Cloth; and so go to mens houses, and will say, We come a begging of your Charity for the Buddou towards his Sacrifice. And the People are very liberal. They give only of three things to him, either Oyl for his Lamps, or Rice for his Sacrifice, or Money or Cotton Yarn for his use" (Knox 1681: 83).

The desire to give and organizing such collective alms-giving, even with the involvement of elite women, is confirmed by Knox's observation. Both Knox and Copleston identified generosity as a gender characteristic. Giving secured a prominent place among the merit-making activities of the Buddhist laity, and the Buddhist organization considered women as a potential target group towards that (Andaya 2002: 9-15). This social notion described in the literary sources was also depicted in murals of

the time. The representation of the story of Sujata's alms-giving was a popular subject which directly demonstrated the generosity of women, and is selected as a case study here. This discussion section examines whether the artist reinforces or changes the social notion discussed above.

The story of Sujata's alms-giving (an act of generosity) secures a prominent place in Buddhist literature, and the story was commended in numerous Buddhist texts as one of the prominent events of the Lord Buddha's life (Ganavimala 1951). Sujata was the prime exemplar and first laywoman in Buddhist history (Andaya 2002: 12). Likewise, there are nineteen temples where this subject has been depicted. After having examined the scenes related to the Sujata's alms-giving in murals, several events in the story as depicted by the artists can be identified: milking cows, cooking milk rice, receiving assistance of the gods to prepare the alms, conversation between Sujata and her servant Punna, notifying the presence of Buddha by Punna, cleaning the surrounding of the tree, carrying the alms, holding the alms in front of the Buddha, offering the alms and worshipping at the feet of Buddha.

At Samudragiri PV and Subodharama RMV depict an additional event which is compatible with the description of *Pūjāvaliya*. According to the description of *Pūjāvaliya*, Sujata orders her servant, Punna, to clean the surroundings of the tree before they carry the offerings (Ganavimala 1951: 175). Sujata providing a besom to Punna, and Punna holding it, are illustrated in these two temples respectively. Both of these scenes convey the service obtained by Sujata from her servant. Punna bows to Sujata, accepting the order and this posture shows the inequality of classes prevalent at the time. Likewise, this reminds us of Selkirk's account of servants who accompanied their masters performing services. The event of receiving the news of the presence of the god is also depicted in Sailabimabarama PV and Subodharama RMV as a reminder of the original story (Ganavimala 1951: 175).

Textual sources state that the cows provided milk instinctively because of the meritorious power of giving, and Sujata just places a bowl to collect it. Though this incident was the subject of paintings at Bambaragala RMV, Vaduwawa and Dambawa TV, the artists bring a different perspective to present Sujata's task of milking cows and collecting milk into a bowl, as reminder to the viewers of a profile of the domestic life

of the women in their villages (Figures 11b-c and 12c-d). Several textual sources (as discussed in Chapter 5, on women's empowerment and division of labour) mention that the dairy was entirely managed by women. The artist's knowledge of the domestic workload of contemporary women may have encouraged the artist to change the event to reflect everyday life.

Textual sources further describe how Sujata prepared the alms with the assistance of the gods (Ganavimala 1951: 175). The scene of cooking is depicted in Sudarshanarama PV, Karapitiya in a similar way to the written account whilst the Dambawa TV and Bambaragala RMV, Vaduwawa show only Sujata cooking it. Again, this shows the devotees village life, with the daily meal of a family prepared in an open hearth by a village woman.

Pūjāvaliya comments in detail on the event of carrying alms (Ganavimala 1951: 175) and this has become the most common depiction of the murals in many places. This is vividly depicted in various places such as Udasgiriya PV, Dambawa TV, Dambulla RMV, Gangarama RMV, Purvarama PV, Katudeniya PV, Kitulpe RMV, Nagavimanaya PV, Nagolla RMV, Suriyagoda RMV, Sailbimbarama PV, Samudragiri PV, and Sudarshanramaya PV, Godapitiya (Figures 11-12). The mode of carrying alms used by the artist of Samudragiri PV is similar to that of the textual narration (Figure 11a). Generally, it is noted that some of the places visualized it simply as Sujata carrying the alms on her head. Conversely, most of the other places, such as Kitulpe RMV, Udasgiriya PV and Katudeniya PV, tend to illustrate it simply as one of the common religious actions of a village woman (Figures 11b-c and12c-d). This tendency tells us that the artists of temples in rural settings shaped the stories according to their social experiences.

Though the original story mentions the participation of the female servant to this event of offering, only a very few temples decided to depict it. Specifically, the servant is incorporated into the offering mural only in Subodarama RMV. This undoubtedly suggests that the female servants were kept away from religious activities in the low-country. This could simply be interpreted as an effort of the artist to save space on the panel by omitting the servant's figure, however, the artist of Samudragiri PV allocates a significant place to the servants in his very long panel. This same panel also depicts

these servants being used for work such as cleaning, and there are six male attendants in the procession. Therefore, the absence of the female servant in the event of offering is noteworthy. This may reflect the restriction of privileges of female servants who worked in the noble houses of southern Sri Lanka.

The next scene of the story is holding the alms bowl and offering it to the Buddha. This popular event is depicted in the murals found in Bambaragala RMV, Vaduwawa, Dambawa TV, Gangarama RMV, Subodarama RMV, Purvarama PV, Ranvella PV, Sailabimbarama PV, Samudragiri PV, Sudarshanrama PV, Karapitiya, Sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda and Sudarshanrama PV, Godapitiya. The veneration after the offerings is also depicted in many places such as Dambulla RMV, Purvarama PV, Sailabimbarama PV, and Samudragiri PV. One can notice that the female servant also venerates the Buddha by sitting or standing behind her mistress. It gives an idea that certain houses in the up-country gave religious freedom to their slaves, who then had an opportunity to receive the merits and blessing of the act of generosity. According to the traditional story, upon hearing from the female servant that the god is present under the tree, Punna was upgraded to the status of a daughter to Sujata and she was given elegant clothes and jewelry (Ganavimala 1951: 175). In contrast to the textual description, the majority of the up-country and low-county artists, except the artist at Nagavimana PV, did not show this equal status between Sujata and Punna. The most striking observation to emerge from the data comparison is one of social hierarchy and the discrimination of religious freedom in feudal society during that period.

When we generally analyze the depiction of alms-giving in murals, it can be identified as a preferred subjects of the artists of the period. Some temples present only a single event from the story, however, it directly helps the viewers to understand that this is the depiction of Sujata's alms-giving. When one notices the picture of carrying an alms bowl or a woman carrying it on her head to offer to the Buddha seated under a tree, it is easily identified as the story of Sujata because of the great popularity of the story. The artists favoured this subject even in small temples. Some places like Samudragiri PV tried to portray a descriptive narration of the original story which shows the popularity of the story among Buddhists. The overall representation of the story shows that the artists in most of these places replaced the aristocratic, classical figure of Sujata with a village woman in their visual representations. The strong relationship of women and

religion in villages may have encouraged artists to use such a portrayal. It was an indirect invitation and encouragement to other women to practice their giving regularly and enthusiastically.

There are a considerable number of scenes in murals which depict giving alms in addition to Sujata's alms-giving. Of those giving food to the Buddha, monks and beggars are noteworthy. It is interesting to note that some of them show the collective giving of husband and wife. For instance, in Arattana RMV the husband is the one who serves the food and not his wife. In Ranvella PV, Amaradevi gives foods to a beggar while a royal woman offers food to monks (Figure 13). On the other hand, there are some rare depictions of kings who offer food to monks and hermits whilst the wives are kept inside the house. This is an instance where women are kept away from participating in some religious activities.

It can be noted that the giving habits of women is one of the outstanding subjects of pre-modern murals and this habit was noticed and recorded in contemporary textual sources. We can question why the artists preferred to highlight this subject in their visual imagery and it can be interpreted in three ways. First, the popularity of the story of Sujata was one of the most important events of the Buddha's life; second, the practice of alms-giving of women was a daily habit; and third, it encouraged other women in such activities and to appreciate meritorious deeds. The great popularity of the subject in murals and evidence of the textual sources reveal that women played a vital role in religious history. The role of women as lay devotees was strengthened by this religious act and the role of women can be highlighted as patrons who took care of the subsistence of the Buddhist monk. In contrast, temples such as Degaldoruwa RMV place the woman in scenes of giving but highlighted it as an act of men. In general, however, it is evident that the society of the time considered generosity as a gender characteristic. It is linked with women's identity and indirectly women were required to practice this religious act. Finally, it indicates to us the active involvement of women in religious institutions in both the up-country and low-county as well as in urban and rural settings.

Alms-giving is one of the meritorious acts of generosity and it shows a simple side of the life of women as patrons of Buddhism. There are a number of other donations of

material gifts which also reflect the role of women as patrons, and portrayals in pre-modern murals emphasizes the value of the merit-making act of giving. The next section discusses the nature of this women's patronage as depicted in pre-modern murals and it strengthens the religious role of women in pre-modern society.

4.2.3 Women as Patrons of Religion

According to evidence from archaeology and literature, the history of women as religious patrons in South Asia, particularly in India, goes back to the early Buddhist period. Thapar's (1992) and Dehejya's (1992) discussion about women as patrons of Buddhism illuminates the social space of women as an active religious role. Similarly, the history of female sponsorship in Sri Lanka dates back approximately to the early historic period (third Century BCE) and among those the majority were the elite women (Kiribamune 1990b: 35). As noted in the introductory chapter, according to literary sources and popular beliefs, King Kirti Sri Rajasimha (eighteenth Century) was the most prominent donor of most of the Buddhist temples in pre-modern times (Gunasinghe 1978: 10). There is sufficient evidence to suggest, however, that the Buddhist art and architecture of the period were not erected and adorned by a single donor but by a collective patronage of men and women from different social strata. Such sponsorship of religious places was also considered as a giving or a good deed done in order to acquire merit.

The account of *Cūlavaṃsa* of the queens of King Vijaya Rajasinghe provides the most extensive description (Geiger 1992; ch. 98, vv. 1-20) of the donations of material gifts and the religious conscience of women recorded by an androcentric elite bias literature in Sri Lanka. *The conspicuous account from Cūlavaṃsa* is questionable.[103] The author of *Cūlavaṃsa,* emphasises the building of the Buddhist identity of the king by elevating the religiosity of his sister who was queen to the previous king. This is a notable agenda which authors of *Mahāvaṃsa* and *Cūlavaṃsa* followed regarding women in their and rocentric historiography.

Other literary sources, such as the Gazetteer of the Central Province and folklore, provide ample evidence to reconstruct the history of women who participated in

[103] This has been discussed in section 1.4 of Chapter 1 see pages 16-17

sponsoring the construction of Buddhist temples. Henakanda Biso Bandara, who was one of the powerful elite women, acted as a prominent donor in the up-country (Lawrie 1898: 554). Folk stories and literary sources credit her with sponsorship of a considerable number of up-country temples including Hindagala RMV (Tundeniya and Gunawansa 1997).

The most notable female donor of the low-country was Amarasekera Lamatani, or the aristocratic lady Amarasekera, in Kataluwa Walauva. A donative inscription reveals that she made her contribution to establish the temple at Ranvella temple in 1841. The main purpose of building a temple was to gain merit, so as to be blessed with a child (Palihapitiya 1993: 255). According to Lawrie (1898), there were number of women who were involved in individual and collective acts of giving to the temples (Table 4). The most prominent donors were the elite women but there were also women who represented the commoners.

In Uttamarama PV, a lay woman acted as patron for a panel of *Ummagga Jātaka*. The donative inscription of the painting introduces her as "Daso Upasaka Amma" or lay mother Daso. Female patrons in the low-country were notable for commissioning murals of *Ummagga Jātaka*, in which there is an intelligent woman. In this regard, the presence of *Ummagga Jātaka* in Ranvella PV and Uttamarama PV suggests that the contribution of women in patronage determines the subject matter or the theme of the image house.

4.2.3 Social Space Occupied by Women as Patrons of Religious Art

It is noteworthy that the sponsorship of paintings in Garakmedilla RMV in Kandy marks the dominance of women and this place is the only place we meet women as collective patrons of religious art. The second image house contains murals of the late colonial period, and the patronage of its murals is examined here as a case study to understand the social space occupied by women as patrons.

The subject matter of the murals of the second image house focuses on the life of the Buddha. They are represented in 31 separate scenes that elevate and represent the visual liturgy of the shrine. The murals that are inscribed with a description of the donor are examined here as primary sources of a comparative study (Table 5; Figures 14 and 15a-b). The name of the village, family, personal name of the respective donor and social

status are given in the descriptions which provides information on the social hierarchy and certain social dynamics of that time.

According to the evidence, donors from aristocratic, upper middle and lower social groups, and those categorized as lower castes, had sponsored mural representation (Table 5). Women, 26 in total, clearly outnumber male donors and there are two other anonymous donors making endowments for murals here (figure 14). This reflects the active involvement of women at religious places and in religious observances.

The establishment of religious spaces and observances in the period under discussion were done under the patronage of royalty and aristocracy. Women from craft and service families, including "untouchables", were also eager to display their religious sentiments as patrons of the arts. Significantly, the spatial arrangement of paintings and their locational context reflect the existing social hierarchy. There are four horizontal painting strips dividing the walls of the shrine and significantly, the uppermost panel that dominates the visual space is sponsored by elite women. Members of the Ranawana Walawva[104] and their relations reinforced their social dominance by sponsoring the majority of the painting panels on a wall. Conversely, the lowest panel has those murals sponsored by women with lower caste status. The viewer is provided with the reality of the existing social hierarchy and the endeavour of elite groups to maintain the status quo of social gradation, even within a declining feudal social order. Among the donors of murals, villagers and people from neighbouring villages can be recognized. The temple is situated in Arambepola, eight miles from Kandy on the Matale road. The Harasgama Walawva is an aristocratic house in the area, and Harasgama Walawve Bandara Manika was a woman from this family, who sponsored one panel of the temple. Lawrie notes that the Harasgama family was of Dugganna rank.[105] He further mentions that this family

> "become extinct in the male line. Harasgama Mahatmayo was an attendant in the queen's palace (1817). There were repeated litigations between descendants through females" (Lawrie 1988: 331).

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[104] Walawva or Valauva is a 'manor house'

[105] The Duggannā rank was made up of ombudsmen and women. Their status is discussed in the next chapter

Lawrie's account demonstrates the power and prestige of the family and how women became powerful in the family with the extinction of the male line. Lawrie further lists some other names of people who lived in Harasgama house and bore the Harasgama family name but were known as Ranawana Walawve Bandaras (Lawrie 1988: 63-64). This merges with the evidence from the murals since there are four women from Ranavana Walawva who marked their patronage on four separate panels at Garakmedilla RMV. It is clear that these two families were related through marriage. This demonstrates that the members of this family preferred to bear their Ranavana family name to that of Harasgama. Lawrie's account of Ranavana Walawva suggests that social prestige was the reason. Ranawana Walawva was connected through marriage with the famous Mampitiye Walawva, which produced a beautiful and powerful woman, "Mampitiye Dugganna Unnanse", who was the favourite concubine of both Kings Kirti Sri and Rajadhi Raja of Kandy (Lawrie 1898:274 and 528). The relationship of Ranvana Walawva to the royal line encouraged them to introduce themselves with their family name. As a result of their prestige and economic capacity, the women of these two families tended to sponsor the murals of the temple, and they preferred to confirm their place in the social hierarchy even within this religious space.

It is important to note that a range of different social strata is included in this visual language. A woman from a blacksmith's family, two washer women, a woman from a honey-providing village and two men from service families represent this social diversity. It is interesting that people who were not considered elite were allowed to join in a collective religious effort and that they could afford such a donation. The social reformations and changes of the traditional feudal system in Kandy, which both took place under the colonial administration of the British, may be one of the background factors. The Christian missionary, Selkirk, notes an incident that took place in 1836, when 'during the Christmas festival, low-caste girls had been allowed to sit with high caste girls, and had even been served coffee in a cup which the other had used' (Mettananda 1990: 60). Most of the foreign records describe how the colonial administration empowered women and people who were beyond the aristocracy (Mettananda 1990: 60). To a greater extent, this can be identified as one of the positive impacts of Colonial rule, providing a more 'emancipated' situation for women and commoners during that period. On the other hand, the advent of women making

donations should be examined, as this was not very significant in eighteenth and nineteenth century Kandyan.

Lawrie noted the extinction of the male line of the Harasgama family by the end of the nineteenth century, a phenomonen experienced by many families when the colonial administration assassinated thousands of aristocratic men who were against colonial rule. Vimalananda (1970) discusses the bitter experience of the great rebellion of 1818, the first war of independence against the British government and similarly, how the rebellion of 1848 ruined village life with the extinction of men in the up-country. As a result, women representing different social castes had to act as patrons of Buddhism during the late colonial period. This is also identified as a background factor of women's patronage at the second image house of Garakmedilla RMV, and it demonstrates the potential energy of women in acting as saviours for the sake of the wellbeing of Buddhism and the understanding of collective female responsibility.

The temple provides a vivid example of active female participation in the expression of religious faith and their contribution to art. The participation of women from different social strata confirmed their economic strength, which enabled such endowments. They enjoyed relative religious freedom, the relative tolerance of female participation at religious sites by the clergy; and the continuation of a hierarchically graded feudal social order which was represented even at sacred spaces during a period of declining feudalism.

As discussed above, the participation of women in religious donations is evident in both literary and archaeological sources, in the low-country in general and the up-country in particular. The women offered different kinds of donations such as lands and paddy fields to the temples. At the same time, some women sponsored the building of temples, decoration with murals and renovation. The late nineteenth century murals in Gangarama MV is the only depiction of the patronage of women for erecting a Buddhist religious building (Figure 15c). All this evidence highlights the role of women as active patrons to Buddhism and the religious freedom they had in charitable acts, their access to the properties and the economic freedom they enjoyed. Women were also active participants in the Buddhist religious practice of listening to religious discourses.

4.2.4 Listening Religious to Discourse

Listing to sermons was a deep-rooted religious activity among Buddhists and this is one of the popular subjects of early Buddhist art in south Asia, such as at Sanchi, Bharhut and Amaravati in India (Rao 2012: 42-55). Andaya suggests that participation in Buddhist recitation was the most enthusiastic religious practice of laywomen and that women formed the greater part of the listening audience (Andaya 2002: 17-19). This section explores how this meritorious act was practiced and the nature of participation of women in pre-modern Sri Lanka.

> "In the Kandian country, the Brahmajāla Sutta is often read, and the reading of it is always welcome. A great many people, men and women, flock together to the banamaduwa, in which this Sutta is to be read" (Copleston 1904: 259).

As noted by Copleston, the gathering for Buddhist discourses was not restricted to men in pre-modern times. Similarly, the visual evidence of mural painting confirms the desire of women to participate. It may have been utilized as a revivalistic movement by the Buddhists in colonial Sri Lanka. Mural evidence from Sailabimbarama PV and Potgul Maliga MV depicts groups of men and women listening to Buddhist sermons (Figure 16). All of them have folded hands in a gesture of adoration. Gangarama RMV and Potgul Maliga MV in the up-country show the number of laymen outnumber laywomen; with three women and four men shown in Gangarama, RMV and five women and six men in Potgul Maliga MV. In contrast, the panel from Sailabimbarama PV in the low-country depicts two women and a man, however, only the man and one woman have folded hands while the woman behind keeps her hand down. This probably indicates that she was a servant of the other woman and the restriction in religious practices for servants is marked by her hand gesture.

There are two *Jātaka* stories which were the subject of murals which reflect the desire of women to listen to religious discourse, in particular *Vidura Jātaka* and *Ksāntivādī Jātaka*. *Ksāntivādī Jātaka* was painted in eight places in the low-country (Table 1). According to the story, the women of the royal harem had a desire to listen to the sermon of a hermit (Figure 16b), and this scene is highlighted in all the places where the story was depicted. The locational significance of the selection of this story highlights the area of the low-country. That is, all the places where this *Jātaka* story was visualized are limited to the southern coastal areas where the European colonial impact

was most evident. It can be argued that the intention of accommodating this story in the low-county religious context was to stimulate women's participation at religious places and in religious observances.

One of the notable features of the scenes of Buddhist sermons depicted in murals particularly in Potgul Maliga MV is the position of women in the scene. The men are placed before women. This is linked with a religio-cultural ethic still practiced in Sri Lanka. According to this notion, it is considered that women are not supposed to sit or stand next to the Buddhist monks. So then, the artists of the period tended to place women behind the men in the depiction of such occasions, and this is one of the aspects of gender relations in religious life of Sri Lanka. The next section concerns the participation of women in religious festivals and also reflects the gender relations of the time.

4.2.5 Attending Religious Festivals

The participation of women in religious festivals provides outstanding testimony to the position of women in the public sphere. According to literary accounts made by foreigners, women attended processions held in Kandy. Copleston's description shows the active participation of a number of laywomen,

> "for miles one may meet companies of gaily-dressed people, women especially, but by no means exclusively, streaming along, cheerful and well-behaved, towards shrines which a few years ago attracted not a tenth of the number. Near such a shrine itself may be seen a hundred or more women, all in white, each carrying in her uplifted hand a piece of the fragrant areca flower, shouting, " Sadhu " from time to time as they march along, and at any rate enjoying the exhilarating sense of procession" (Copleston 1908: 277).

Knox states that the women who went to the festivals at the Bogaha tree dressed in their finest clothes and remained for three or four nights enjoying entertainments provided by dancers and chewing betel leaves. Furthermore, he provides a descriptive picture of the Kandyan procession,

> "Women of such Casts or Trades as are necessary for the service of the Pagoda, as Potters and Washer−women, each cast goeth in Companies by themselves, three and three in a row, holding one another by the hand; and between each Company go Drummers, Pipers and Dancers…Behind go their Cook−women, with things like whisks in their hands to scare away flies from them; but very

> fine as they can make themselves…Next after the Gods and their Attendance, go some Thousands of Ladies and Gentlewomen, such as are of the best sort of the Inhabitants of the Land, arrayed in the bravest manner that their Ability can afford, and so go hand in hand three in a row" (Knox 1681: 81)
>
> "The use of these Buildings is for the entertainment of the Women Who take great delight to come and see these Ceremonies, clad in their best and richest Apparel. They employ themselves in seeing the Dancers, and the Juglers do their Tricks: who afterwards by their importunity will get Money of them, or a Ring off their Fingers, or some such matters. Here also they spend their time in eating Betel, and in talking with their Consorts, and shewing their fine Clothes" (Knox 1681: 83).

According to the murals, the women contributed to the procession not only by attending as laywomen but also by dancing. It is clear that the murals of the low-country emphasized such performances. Temples such as Kumara MV, Ranvella PV, Sunandarama PV and Telvatta RMV provided images of dancing women who performed in religious processions (Figure 82-90). Though Knox and other foreigners noted the dancing women in Kandy *Daḷadā Perahara* (the procession of the Tooth Temple), there is a restriction for women dancers in attending in present-day Sri Lanka. The procession consists of five sub–processions*: Daḷadā Maligāwa, Nātha Dēvāle, Vishṇu Dēvāle, Kataragama Dēvāle and Pattini Dēvāle* (Seneviratne 1978). Female dancers are permitted to take part only in the procession of Pattini Dēvāle which is dedicated to the Goddess Pattini. Does this contradiction tell us that after the pre-modern period women were keep away from the Daḷadā Perahara and its associated procession which was dedicated to male gods? If so, then it tells us that modern women have lost a privilege they enjoyed in pre-modern times. On the other hand, the accounts of foreign texts do not clearly mention in which procession women took part. As a whole, the participation of women in the procession is evident, but it is not clear whether it was understood that the procession comprised five sub-processions. If the women dancers mentioned in foreign records performed in the procession of Goddess Pattini, it shows the gender discrimination in the pantheon of gods associated with the Tooth Temple of Kandy and the abolition of women's right to take part in a procession

dedicated to the most sacred object of the country which was brought to the country by a woman.[106]

4.3. Worship of 'the Earth Goddess'

> "The goddess of the earth
> Surrounded by a retinue of a hundred times
> Ten million earth goddesses…
> Revealed the upper half of her body
> Adorned with all its ornaments,
> And Bowing with joined palms,
> Spoke thus to the Bodhisattva:
> "Just go, Great being
> It is indeed as you have declared…
> In truth, you are the purest of all beings" (*Lalitavistara*)[107].

The earth mother or the earth goddess is considered to have been the first goddess to appear in the Buddhist pantheon. She secures a prominent place in Buddhist ideology due to her presence as a witness at the Lord Buddha's attainment of enlightenment (Shaw 2006: 17). The Buddha's enlightenment is one of the popular subjects of mural paintings in pre-modern Sri Lanka. The involvement of the earth goddess in the event was very often emphasized by the artists of the period. It is represented in both the up- and low-countries, such as at Dantapaya TV, Udasgiriya PV, Dambulla RMV, Degaldoruwa RMV, Gangarama RMV, Potgul Maliga MV, Hindagala RMV, Kaballelena RMV, Dagama, Katudeniya PV, Kelaniya RMV, Madahapola TV, Madanwala RMV, Niyandavane RMV, Ranvella PV, Sailabimbarama PV, Sanveli RMV, Subodarama RMV, Sudarshanrama PV, Karapitiya, Sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda, Sudarshanarama PV, Godapitiya, Sulunapahura RMV, Tnubodhi PV, and Vagolla PV (Figure17-18). The multifaceted symbolic value of the earth goddess is outstanding in Indian myth and symbolism. She is considered as an icon of motherhood, fertility and a source of life (Shaw 2006: 18). Sri Lankan murals of pre-modern times, however, tend to present the earth goddess as a symbol of truthfulness and a testimony

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[106] The Princess Hemamala the daughter of King of Udeni in India brought the sacred tooth relic to Sri Lanka, hiding it in her hair during the reign of King Kirti Sri Meghavanna in Annuradhapura in fifth century (Geiger 1950: ch. 39 vv.43)

[107] Miranda Shaw quoting and referring the Mahayana Buddhist sutra *Lalitavistara* (Shaw 2006: 17)

of Buddha's enlightenment extending the complexity of the iconography of the earth goddess from her Indian context.

The general description of the physical appearance of the earth goddess as depicted in murals is a female upper torso emerging from the earth at the seat of Buddha at his enlightenment. Her devotional mode varies in different temples, varying her gestures, garments, jewelry, and the way she holds her hands. A highly decorated headdress, hair twisted into a knot, unbound hair or the head covered by a shawl are all variations in her visual representation. Holding a pot or vessel with flowers, flowers in her hands or on her head is a very prominent feature, as it enriched her quality of fertility and wealth. Shaw suggests that the water flowing from her unbound hair may be a symbolic representation of the drowning of Māra and his troops (Shaw 2006: 36). Shaw notes the statue of the earth goddess in Thailand in which she commonly touches her stretched unbound hair. The potrayal of the earth goddess in Niyandawane RMV (Figure 18l) has the same gesture, recalling the strong Thai-Sri Lankan cultural relationship during this period.

The earth goddess is distinctly represented in murals as a woman who lives in respective regional social contexts. Artists have integrated contemporary social identities into the outer appearance of the goddess. The garments of the earth goddess of the up-country and low-country temple murals are entirely compatible with the clothing styles of women who lived in these respective areas. The great temples such as Degaldoruwa RMV, Gangarama RMV and Hindagala RMV depict her as a divine form adorned with elaborate garments and jewelry (Figures17b and 18g). In contrast, she appears not as a divine figure but as a simple country woman in the murals of village temples. Here the goddess is depicted with a simple cloth and a jacket which is reminiscent of the appearance of a peasant (Figure 17c-d and 18b, e, l). The earth goddess' appearance is a symbolic way of understanding the way of dressing the body in respective socio-cultural contexts.

The aspects of protection, guardianship, fertility and motherhood are all highlighted in the form of the earth goddess, and she is elevated to a high religio-cultural status due her strong association with the highest spiritual status of the Buddha's life. The contemporary literary sources mention the devotion of the Sri Lankans towards the earth

goddess.[108] The continuity of this religious notion is strongly evident in pre-modern Sri Lankan murals and demonstrates that these societies also accepted the potentiality of women being witness to their greatest religious personality. The importance of the earth goddess in pre-modern murals, the integration of female cults and the symbolism of female figure are prominent characteristics of murals and the associated iconography of women fits the social notion of auspiciousness.

4.4. Woman as an Auspicious Symbol

The entrances[109] of Sri Lankan monastic complexes and their buildings have been ornately decorated with a multitude of designs, and the efficacy of female figures at the entrances of image houses is outstanding amongst them. As already noted, female figures were carved at the entrance of religious complexes in early historic India and Sri Lanka. It demonstrated the fact that Sri Lankan artists emulated the concept from India and replicated it. The artists and the patrons of pre-modern Sri Lanka also tend to follow this tradition and expanded it many ways.

It is important to understand the architectural features and where, how and why female figures were employed at these places. The different elements of entrances (Figure 19) can be classified as follows:

I Doorway: on doors, on door-frames, door-steps, door jambs, door posts, door sills, on the door lintels.

II Stairways: on steps, top of the stairway, bottom of the stairway, two opposites sides of stairway

III Guard stone

IV Balustrade

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[108] The historical literature of the time begin with a traditional permission from Buddha and then from god and goddess including the earth goddess. However, the "*Mahabhinikman Kāvya*", a religious poem written in eighteenth century, begins by a getting permission of the earth goddess

[109] "The entrance providing access to sacred, semi-sacred and royal buildings in ancient Sri Lanka are embellished with flights of steps, moonstone, guards stone, balustrades and door frame. The door frames and entrances which were simple in design at early periods had been adorned later with sculptured motifs and designs…" (Wikramagamage 1998: 2)

The association of female figures with the door ways of Buddhist image houses is examined here to understand how female figures were used to embellish these elements. The forms of goddesses, queens and composite figures which are part female- part mythical creatures were popular modes of decorating doorways.

4.4.1 Goddess Lakshmi

The worship of the Goddess Lakshmi originally represented a fertility ritual and can be traced approximately to the early historic periods of South Asia. The veneration of Lakshmi had been a popular practice for a long period of time and is still being practiced respectfully to date and her popularity has elevated her status of individual worship. She appears in South Asian cultures in different forms and has become a multicultural symbol. This section examines the function of Lakshmi as a common symbol in murals in pre-modern Sri Lanka.

Lakshmi's different incarnations were contextualized within a multitude of social backgrounds. She is idolized as the Goddess of wealth, both materialistic and spiritual, and the "Ashṭa Lakshmi" concept represents eight forms of Lakshmi presiding in eight sources of wealth: Adi Lakshmi, Dhanya Lakshmi, Dhairya Lakshmi, Gaja Lakshmi, Santana Lakshmi, Vijaya Lakshmi, Vidya Lakshmi and Dhana Lakshmi. Furthermore, Laksmi has been worshipped as the goddess of prosperity, fertility, beauty, auspiciousness and knowledge (Dhal 1978).

Frequently, art forms of Lakshmi depict her as sitting or standing on a lotus and holding a lotus flower in her hands. Two elephants holding pots in their trunks purify Lakshmi. The oldest and the most conspicuous example of the figure of goddess Lakshmi in Indian Buddhist sculpture is depicted at Sanchi, where it is found repeatedly on the gateways of the Great Stūpa (Brown 1959). Similarly, she has been replicated at Bodhgaya, Bharhut and Amaravati (Rao 2012:14-15). The goddess Lakshmi also occurs in Indian Jain art at Udayagiri, and she was frequently visualized in Hindu art in the Mamallapuram, Tanjour and Hampi in South India.

The representation of Lakshmi figures in Sri Lanka was most probably introduced in the early historic period on the so-called Lakshmi plaques (Codrington 1924:27). The existence of her figure on Lakshmi Plaque coins found in Sri Lanka reflects the requirement and demand of Lakshmi as a symbol of wealth and prosperity

(Karunarathna 2010:1-2). The *Lukshmi* cult was popularized through Mahayanism and was incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon in Sri Lanka, and Lakshmi was situated in different positions at places of worship (Figure 20). The metallic image of the goddess has also been discovered from Jetavana monastery, Anuradhapura, conveying the bond of Hinduism and Buddhism as having a shared heritage during the middle historic period. She has also been portrayed on the *āyaka* of Digawapi stūpa. Her figures were carved at the entrances of several Buddhist monasteries in Sri Lanka, beginning in the middle historic period at Issurumuniya to late historic sites such as Nalanda Gedige and at the late medieval site of Yapahuwa. Two Gaja Lakshmi figures were elaborately carved on either side of the Galpotha inscription at the medieval capital of Polonnaruwa (Karunarathna 2010:1-2).

The tradition of employing the figure of Goddess Lakshmi at the entrances of temples was highly valued in Buddhist art forms of pre-modern Sri Lanka. Places such as Daḷadā Māligāwa or the Tooth Temple of Kandy, Uda Aludeniya RMV, Padeniya RMV, Mulkirigala RMV and Kappagoda RMV, all have the figure of Lakshmi at the entrance to the image houses; most of them presented as carvings on the lintel of the doorway (Figure 21b-c). The carving of Lakshmi on the roof of Embekke Dewala is remarkable (Figure 21a), as it conveys a high spiritual significance, as this is the highest place on the structure with the god Kataragam, the sacred idol of the Temple, situated under the roof. Placing a female goddess on the topmost level of the religious building gives her prominence. According to the folk stories, it is believed that Embekke Dewala was built at the request and patronage of Henakanda Biso Bandara, the most famous female patron in the up-country. On the other hand this temple is situated in a traditional craft village (Tilakasiri 1994) and the goddess Lakshmi is still worshiped by the craftsmen. The association of a powerful woman with the temple's history, its location in a craft village where she was venerated in daily worship, and the popularity of the Lakshmi cult at the time may have elevated her to the highest level. Lakshmi sitting on a lotus at Mulkirigala RMV is the only preserved example of the goddess Lakshmi in the mural painting of Sri Lanka (Figure 22). The goddess is flanked by two fly whiskers and two attendants. She is adorned with jewelry such as elaborate headdress and armlets, she is seated in a crossed-leg posture and her hand gesture symbolizes good wishes to the devotees.

Lakshmi worship also demonstrates the fact that Sri Lankan artists emulated the concept of the Lakshmi cult from India and replicated it. Gaja Lakshmi was the most popular form in Sri Lankan art. It was significant that the figure of Lakshmi is depicted in the great temples (RMV) erected under the patronage of the king. The Nayakkars were originally Hindus, though they embraced Buddhism in order to establish their Buddhist identity. At the same time, the queens and concubines were also imported from Madura, South India. The worship of Lakshmi in the Hindu pantheon, which was the original belief of Nayakkars may have influenced the artists to employ her figure in Buddhist temples. On the other hand, Buddhist temples had to appeal to popular demands of the time, and the south Indian impact in Sri Lankan society may have created a multi-cultural background to the contemporary social context. As a result, Buddhism had to absorb numerous religious cults of the little tradition into the main pantheon to cater to cultural diversity. Consequently, the incorporation of images considered as highly auspicious may have delineated the transition between sacred and secular space, by depicting shared cultural symbols in the central areas of the image houses, such as the entrances. The most notable symbolic value of the Lakshmi figure is fertility and this is a profile of the *shakti* cult. The protective aspect was also emphasized by the ancient artists in the South Asian region and elsewhere. Her universal form representing auspiciousness and good luck can be recognized as the one encountered in pre-modern murals, and these murals mirrored the cultural diversity of the time. The influence of British colonialism in the low-country also contributed to the multi-cultural aspects in the murals. The advent of Queen Victoria replacing the goddess Lakshmi is the most prominent instance and the socio-religious factors of the portrayal of Queen Victoria is explored below.

4.4.2 Queen Victoria in Buddhist Image Houses?

It is notable that the figure of Lakshmi was replaced by the figure of Queen Victoria by the end of nineteenth century, particularly in the low-county painting tradition. The main entrances of the image houses of Purvarama, Kotte and Subadrarama (Figure 23) place the figure of the Queen in a very prominent place. Not only her figure but also the name of the temple was written in English, just below the Queen's figure. The crowned

Queen with the British emblem is painted and the location of the figure grabs the attention of the devotees[110]. In sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, and Jetawanarama RMV, the figure of Queen Victoria is located at the entrance to the shrine of the gods within the main shrine. At Polwatta PV and Telambugala RMV (Figure 25) her figure is repeated on the uppermost painting panel of the outer wall of the image house and on the ceiling of the preaching hall. It is interesting to note that the artist of Purvarama PV visualized her figure even on the houses which were painted into the stories on the wall of the image house. Wickremasinghe (2003) notes the fashion of hanging portraits of Queen Victoria on the house walls during the colonial period (Figure 26). This custom encouraged the low-country artist to depict such houses with the Queen's figure in the narrative stories in their visual representations.

It is important to understand why the artist's of the period enshrined a figure of a foreign non-Buddhist queen in a Buddhist image house. Examination of background factors and the disposition of the figure provide a sufficient answer to the question. It is noted that the years when Purvarama PV and Kotte RMV were built, where her figure is depicted at the main entrances, coincide with the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The contributors to the temple constructions may have celebrated the jubilee of the contemporary ruler of the country by placing her figure at the most venerable location at the entrance. There is evidence that the people of pre-modern Sri Lanka enthusiastically celebrated the jubilee. "Victōria *Aṭṭhaka*" (Appendix 5), or "A Blessing on Her Majesty Empress Victoria", was a poem written in the Pāli language and consists of eight verses magnifying her majesty and evoking blessing for victories and a long life. At the same time, poems on the Diamond Jubilee of the Queen, ten poems on Queen Victoria and her rule, and the Diamond Jubilee celebration festival of Queen Victoria is also included in the form of verse in the same book (Gunasekera 1896-7). A statue of Queen Victoria in Colombo provides material evidence for the enthusiasm of Sri Lankan people towards the jubilee. It can be argued, therefore, that the Queen may have been perceived as a symbol of prosperity, who was raised into the position of a goddess of prosperity replacing the goddess Lakshmi and other auspicious female figures.

[110] The British emblem is evident in most of the low-country temples (Figure 24)

The depiction of the Queen's figure at the entrances of the shrines to other gods inside the image houses indicates her function as a guardian goddess. It is evident that most of the old noble houses still place a figure of the Queen on walls as a symbol of their status. The portrayal of the Queen in a gesture of veneration, as depicted in Polwatta and Telambugala, demonstrates a slightly different story. In Polwatta, there are fourteen figures which reflect a similar appearance to the Queen and all the figures are in the gesture of worship to Buddha. It is common for mural artists of the period to illustrate lay women who were great patrons to the Buddha, such as Vishaka. On the one hand, this could be seen as an effort to depict a woman of high social status by showing her as a European in elegant garments, however, the indication of a crown on the head of these female figures raises questions regarding this argument. It again directs us to Queen Victoria. The colonial influence and the Queen as the ruler may have come to the temple murals. By presenting her figure, Buddhist artists tended to visually convert the Queen into a Buddhist devotee who worships Buddha. Even so, the presence of Victoria unambiguously demonstrates to us that she was considered an auspicious symbol.

4.4.3 Composite Female Figures

The employment of puzzling female figures in mural painting is another auspicious female symbolism of the period. The combination of women arranged in the form of various animals and objects (Coomaraswamy 1908: 91) emerges dramatically in pre-modern art forms. Women are combined in different forms and they are named accordingly:

2- *Dvi-nāri-ratha* (two women chariot)

4- *Catur-nāri-pallakki* (four women palanquin), *Catur-nāri-swastika* (four women swastika)

5 - *Pañca-nāri- ghaṭa* or *gæta* (five women pot or knot)

6 - *Shaṭ-nāri-toraṇa* (six women arch)

7 - *Sapta-nāri-ratha* (seven women chariot), *Sapta-nāri-turanga* (seven women horse), *Sapta-nāri-pallækki* (seven women palanquin)

8- *Asṭa-nāri-ratha* (eight women chariot)

9 - *Nava-nāri-kuñjara* (nine women elephant)

12 - *Dwādasha-nāri-kuñjara* (twelve women elephant).

Among these combined figures, *Catur-nāri-pallækki*, *Pañca-nāri-ghaṭa, Sapta-nāri-ratha* and *Nava-nāri-kuñjara* are painted in the Tooth Temple Kandy. *Catur-nāri-pallækki* in Bihalpola, *Catur-nāri-pallækki* in Kotte, *Nava-nāri-kuñjara* in Ridi Vihara, *Pañca-nāri-ghaṭa* in Telwatta, and *Pañca-nāri-ghaṭa* in Unambuwa are presented as combined female figures in murals. At the same time *Pañca-nāri-ghaṭa* in Dippitiya and Ridi Vihara, the Tooth Temple and Vishnu Dewala Hanguranketa, and *Catur-nāri-pallækki* in Edaduwawa, are the other religious places which depict the same tradition in other art forms such as ivory and wood and stucco carvings (Figures 28-29).

It is necessary to ask why these female figures were combined and what was their function at the entrances? According to the *Sælalihini Sandēsha* (Senanayake 1972: v. 16),[111] the full pot, women who talk good words, and elephants are considered the most auspicious symbols that one could meet at activities. Women are included in the list and this social notion has been enhanced by combining one auspicious symbol with another auspicious form. The protection, prosperity and auspiciousness acquired from these decorative devices met the devotees entering the shrine. The popularity of these combined figures is demonstrated by the folk songs created to identify each decoration. The majority of these figures were created with seven females and it suggests the most popular seven female concepts such as "*Sat Pattini*" and "*Sapta Mātrika*".

4.4.4 Nāri-latā the Women Vine

Nāri-latā, or the women vine, is a,

> "strictly mythical vegetable ornament, the *Nāri-latā -vela* is the most remarkable and most often used. It is a mythical climbing vine of which the flower has the appearance of a woman, 'in all wise of perfect beauty, glorious in grace'; like other mythical things, it grows in the Himalayas; and has been known to shake the resolution of hermits dwelling there. It is very common element in Kandyan design…" (Coomaraswamy 1908:92).

As stated by Coomaraswamy, *Nāri-latā* is the most common decorative element of pre-modern murals (Figure 33) and it elevated the aesthetic background of visual imagery of the time (Gunasinghe 1978). The observational field survey recorded the use of *Nāri-*

[111]*Sælalihini Sandēshaya* is a poem written in sixteenth century by Rev. Totagamuwe Sri Rahula lived in Telwatta RMV in Galle District (Senanyake 1972)

latā everywhere in the image house: the entrance, on the door and doorway, wall, and ceiling (Figures 29-32). Nevertheless, *Nāri-latā* is recognized outwardly as a decorative motif which fills the blank spaces of the imagery of the shrines and this section looks at the functional value of *Nāri-latā* beyond its decorative aspect.

In the discussion of the history of *Nāri-latā*, Coomaraswamy quotes a story of *Kathāvastu Pakaraṇa*,

> "he saw in a creeper called *Nāri-latā*, a full blown flower having the appearance of a woman, in all wise of perfect beauty, glorious in grace. At that very moment he lost the power of Dhyāna which he had so long successfully practised by great self control; his Dhyāna disappeared at the thought of indulgence, his passions were let loose…" (Coomaraswamy 1908: 93)

which shows the appearance, consequence of lust and religious ideology towards *Nāri-latā*. The *Subhāsita*,[112] also demonstrates that *Nāri-latā* shakes the resolution of hermits (Edirisingha 1920: v. 41). In this context, it is not advisable to interpret outwardly giving a single and simple identification of her decorative or lustful aspects. On the other hand, if *Nāri-latā* is a symbol of lust which shakes the resolution of the religious mind, then why did the pre-modern artists did use such a remarkable figure in Buddhist image houses? Did the artists of the time purposely intended to shake the mind of the viewers?

Significantly, the appearance of *Nāri-latā* can be used for different interpretations. The upper part of the *Nāri-latā* is a female. Her lower body starts from a flower which connects vines of unending foliages. The full, round and firm breasts are prominent on her upper body. Sometimes, the artists, for instance in the murals of Bambaragala RMV, Vaduwawa tend to over-emphasis the breasts (Figures 30c; 32h). This can be identified as one of the ways that artists demonstrated fertility. The flower is the origin of a fruit, which is a metaphor for the reproductive potential of women. The visual images may thus symbolize the vagina of women by this flower. The unending foliage coming out from the flower, and the fruits, and small face of human figures which were connected in this flowery part of *Nāri-latā* also suggest the potential for women to produce the next generation.

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[112] The *Subhāsita* is a Sinhalese anthology written by Alagiyawanna Mukaveti in the fifteenth century (Edirisingha 1920).

Dehejiya examines the function of women in terms of blossom or fruit bearing trees. She discusses the concept first brought to light by Pratapaditay (1981), of the iconography of women associated with trees as the "positive association of women with fertility, growth, abundance, prosperity and hence, the auspicious". She points out the convention of ancient India which "was believed that woman, by her very touch, could cause a tree to blossom or bear fruit" (Dehejia 1997: 5-6). In this respect, it can argued that *Nāri-latā*, as a composite figure of a women and foliage, was popularly used in the art forms of pre-modern times and also as a concept of fertility and the reproductive power of women. Conversely, the *Nāri-latā* figure was often used at the entrance of the image house (Figure 29a-c). This suggests the *Nāri-latā* was a welcoming figure. Philpot also notes that the "…flower buds appeared out of the ground, from each of which, as it opened, there leapt forth a beautiful maiden…" (Philpot 1897: 60-61). This suggests a similar usage of mythical female flowers in friendly greeting and welcoming. Dehejia also highlights the function of women associated with trees as a sign of auspiciousness (Dehejia 1997: 06). Correspondingly, the *Nāri-latā*, depicted in doorways can also be recognized as a figure which welcomes the devotees. Likewise, her depiction on the lintel of the door was a symbol of auspiciousness which greeted the devotees.

4.5 Social Consensus on Religious Perception of Women

An evaluation of women's freedom to perform in the religious sphere contextualizes the woman in her proper institutional background. The attempts of women at spiritual liberation, the cultural prejudices against women's religious life, religious dignity between genders, the oppressive position of society towards her religious involvement, the patriarchal view and hierarchy of religious practices are examined comparatively throughout this study.

The most striking circumstance of female emancipation is the renunciation of women to become the form of "upāsikā" by the end of nineteenth century in the Sri Lankan religious context. This can be considered as a religious movement aimed at regaining their religious inheritance by recalling the renunciation of Queen Anula and others (Geiger 1950: ch. 19, vv.74-83) who wore white clothes with shaven heads, and who introduced themselves as upasika in the third century BCE in Sri Lanka.

There was no ideological obstacle to the reintroduction of the order of nuns, which would have provided gender equality. King Kirti Sri Rajasimha was the political authority of the country who pioneered the revival of monasticism in Sri Lanka, but a revival of Buddhism was not his main goal. As Holt suggests (1996), Kirti Sri wanted to establish his identity as a Buddhist king and as the saviour of the religion. By the end of nineteenth century, however, there was a social demand to raise the religious status of women. For example, Katrine de Alvice, an aristocratic woman, travelled to Burma to become a nun and returned to Sri Lanka at the beginning of the twentieth century (Bartolamuze 1994). This movement was not a coincidence but a result of a female *upāsikā* religious movement.

The artists of the period also were sensitive to female emancipation and tried to encourage women to participate in such activities. According to the original story of *Vessantara Jātaka*, Mandri, the wife of Prince Vessantara who renounced her royalty and decided to live in a forest. She was supposed to fulfil daily activities in the forest hermitage: cleaning, finding food, and child rearing while prince Venssantara practiced meditation. Conversely, the artists of Asgirigedige RMV, Vagolla RMV and Degaldoruva RMV depict her figure in the form of a female hermit who carries a rosary in her hand (Figure 34c-e). One can argue that she changes her garments suitable to the forest hermit life as described in the original story, however, the symbolic representation of having a rosary in her hand is a direct portrayal of her meditational practice. Moreover, the inscription on the painting in Vagolla PV reveals that she also became a hermit and practiced meditation for her liberation (Figure 34d-e). The empathetic approach and religious justice of the artists upgraded her religious role beyond a stereotypical housewife.

This idea was reinforced by the compilation of a new *Jātaka* (locally composed) story entitled "*Iti bisō Jātaka*"[113] in pre-modern times and its inclusion in the traditional *Jātaka* book of 550 stories. Significantly, the central character who aspires to become the Buddha is always a man in these stories. The new story stands out with its portrayal

[113] This new jataka is recorded by Hugh Nevill in his *Sinhala Verse (Kavi) Collected by Hugh Nevill* (1954) and Somadasa (1959) includes "*Iti Bisō Jātaka Kavi*" manuscript in his catalogue of Sri Lankan Manuscripts (British museum catalogue no; Or 6604(174).N.172)

of the boldness and the equality of pre-modern peasants, who compilated a new story about a woman named "*Iti Bisō*" who entered her spiritual path to become a Buddha in her forthcoming birth. At the same time, the composition of a long poem entitled "*Hattipāla Jātaka*",[114] which reveals the awareness of Buddhist ideology by Kurakkan Gedara Achari Bavalath (a poetess from a traditional craft family), is one example of the revitalization of women's religiosity.

It is evident, that women were targeted by colonial rulers to implant European culture in Sri Lanka. They tried to enforce their social objectives by nourishing their women with an English education and Christianity. Quotations such as "women take no prominent part in the ceremonies of Boodhaical worship" (De Butts 1841: 134) and "Kandy women were not required "to think anything about religion" (Selkirk 1844) highlight the desire of missionaries to take advantage of gender discrimination prevalent in their contemporary societies. Though they demonstrate the social obstacles to women's religious world, some descriptions of women's involvement in religious activities contradict the quotations of British missionaries. In his reports to the home country, Davy provided stronger evidence of women's religiosity.

> "women as well as men may visit the temples for religious purposes; and indeed, as in most countries where there is no restraint or prohibition, the Singalese women are to be seen at devotion more frequently than men" (Davy 1821: 226).

It is important to highlight the social notion that the issue of female gender stereotypes went beyond the religious conscience. This is exemplified by the weeping scene in the *Uraga Jātaka* painting at Madawala TV (Figure 4a) which demonstrated how pervasive were the social consensus regarding gender characteristics. Here, the painter completely breaks down the religious personality of women at the same time destroying the central idea of the story. In the story, the god Sakra was impressed with the mindfulness of the farmer's wife, even when faced with the tragic demise of her own son. In contrast, ignoring the description of the *Jātaka* story, the artist placed the hand of the farmer's wife on her head in this painting, which was a direct way of symbolizing her lamentation. At the same time the farmer is shown with the exact gesture and posture to establish that he is stoic. The main argument of this iconographic analysis is that the

[114] Somadasa (1959) includes the "*Hatthipāla Jātaka*" manuscript in his catalogue of the Sri Lankan Manuscripts (British museum catalogue no; Or 6603(25) ; Or6603 (211))

artist had visibly recast the central idea of the story with a gender bias towards the notion of weeping.

Similarly, the *Vessantara Jātaka* painting of Sunandarama PV confirms this social consensus. According to the story, Prince Vessantara donates his all movable and immovable properties before he left the palace, with the consent of Mandri his wife. In the Sunandarama PV painting, however, she places her hand on her cheek to show her dislike of her husband's generosity (Figure 35), suggesting she was worried about losing her properties. As before it shows how the gender bias of artists led to a change in the central idea of the stories.

It is known that the European impact on Sri Lankan culture resulted in a socio-religious transformation, and the southern coastal areas were confronted with this new cultural influence. The mural paintings of the low-country thus provided a force for social reformation. Here, artists greatly emphasized Buddhist ethics depicting the ideal Buddhist woman, and they presented themes such as the concept of hell and heaven and meritorious Buddhist acts (Figure 36 a-c). According to early Buddhist teaching there were four hells, but, the mural paintings of pre-modern Sri Lanka introduced thirty-two hells which demonstrated the misbehaviour of contemporary people and the consequences. By increasing the numbers of hells according to the bad deeds committed by contemporary society, including polygamy and abortions, this may have acted as a means of purification in eradicating sinful or bad deeds from the society. Woman became the icon who bore the cultural identity through the religious discipline of prescribed women behaviour (Figures 37-38). The mural painting of pre-modern Sri Lanka, therefore, acted as a socio-religious medium and a code of practice for the time. In other words, the murals of the period acted as a religious handbook which prescribed women's social behaviour and social values. Since the women of period were not much equipped with literacy Buddhist murals as a form of visual art may have had considerable influence in shaping the role of women in society.

The insights of this chapter can be summarized in three main steps. First, evidence for the active involvement of women in religious activities testified to a lack of gender discrimination in society in religious practices (Figures 37-38). Women participated in both daily and special religious practices such as alms-giving and pilgrims. The family

as an institution carried out meritorious acts and outstanding generosity and the habit of giving was embedded in the role of lay women. In literary sources, this is considered as a gender characteristic and the murals reinforce this idea. Foreign visitors and scholars who research the religious life of women, convey the idea that Sri Lankan women enjoyed more religious freedom than other countries in the world. Yet, the religious status of female servants was inferior. Though the role of women is often equated with religious practices, the conventional religious norms sometimes place her in a secondary position to men; for instance women are placed behind men in scenes of religious sermons. In the early historic periods, the religious role of women was degraded in terms of the absence of nuns, that is, their religious rights had been neglected by the androcentric religio-political authority. Notwithstanding this discontinuation of the order of nuns, this study suggests that artists rarely represented the role of the Buddhist nun changing her appearance according to the gender identity of the time. The role of women as Buddhist patrons is also testified by both murals and textual sources. Though it is not common in relation to men, women in both the up-and low-countries show their economic stability and in the freedom in individual and collective patronage. A prominent example is recorded in late colonial murals of Garakmedilla RMV.

Second, the social consensus of the female figure as a symbol of auspiciousness is vividly evident. This concept evoked several female cults demonstrating how womanhood was valued by society. The representation of the earth goddess attests the accordance of Buddhists venerating a female goddess who was associated with the enlightenment of Lord Buddha. At the same time, it shows the concept of a gendered landscape: considering earth as a woman. It is conspicuous that a female figure functioned as an auspicious symbol at the entrance of the image houses. The artists depicted the figure of Goddess Lakshmi, as well as mythical and composite female figures for this purpose. The shared cultural symbolism in the Buddhist art continued in the murals of pre-modern times. In particular, the figure of Queen Victoria was also valued as auspicious, particularly in low-country murals. The present study unswervingly conveys how the society of the time the considered female figure as auspicious.

Finally, this current research illustrates the social notion and the gender norms of social contexts. The murals of the great tradition tended to depict some ideal religious

concepts whilst the sensible approach of the village artists towards women is evident. The functional value of murals conveys that they aimed to condition the religious behaviour of the role of women.

Chapter 5. Women's Roles and Empowerment

In archaeological interpretations, understanding gender roles acts as a vehicle to reconstruct the socio-economic history of the past. Hays-Gilpin and Whitley (1998: glossary) define the meaning of gender roles as "what men and women actually do in specific social contexts". In different social contexts, there are predetermined tasks assigned to men and women. According to Nelson, gender roles imply what men and women are expected to perform or what they involve most of the time in their daily social lives (Nelson 2002: 119). In this respect, understanding gender roles is a mirror to reflect social concensus towards division of labour of respective social contexts. Consequently, this demonstrates strength, capacity, skill, and responsibility of individuals towards the well-being of the family and the society. So then, identifying the roles played by women and the nature of their roles foster this research. It will help to define explicitly whether or not artists represented a gendered division of labour and economic self-reliance of women in pre-modern times. The participation of women in income-generating activities is an indicator of women's empowerment. Likewise, involvement in decision-making within the household and society, political participation, and access to education and skills also can be considered as the mainstreams of women's empowerment (Batliwala 1994: 127-138). The aim of this chapter is to draw out the nature of gender roles and review how women were empowered by society as represented by the artists of pre-modern Sri Lankan murals.

The first section of this chapter explores the different roles played by women as visualized by the artists and the roles and tasks attributed to them are classified. The conceptual potrayal in murals is then compared with textual evidence to build a better argument and to construct a logical analysis of the multifaceted contribution of women towards the economy in respective times and spaces. In order to understand the process of women's empowerment, the theme is examined under four main streams: the position of women in the private sphere, women in the public sphere, the decision-making power of women and women's education. The approach of this chapter is determined by the nature of the primary data. Sections one and two identify a range of roles played by women, comparing the absence and involvement of men in those activities. Dividing this into two categories based on women's labour according to the task setting; the

private sphere and public sphere, reveals the social perception towards the gendered division of labour and gendered space. The last two sections deal with the nature of women's empowerment by means of decision-making power and education.

5.1 Women in the Private Sphere

Gender roles may be defined as, "the activities and statuses that are associated with specific genders in each society" (Gilchrist 1999:XV). As a cultural norm, the majority of societies tend to assign tasks based on gender (Hays-Gilpin and Whitley 1998: 139-141). This section investigates the particular activities assigned to women in the private sphere. For centuries, domestic activities have generally been assigned to women in many different cultures around the world (Gilchrist 1999: 32-36). The aim of this section is to understand whether the Sri Lankan artists also reinforced that firm social ideology in pre-modern social contexts. This section, consequently, attempts to understand whether the artists intended to differentiate tasks as strictly masculine or feminine. It is important to note that the main sources of this research do not provide a direct picture of female empowerment because representing women's life was not the objective of the mural artists. Therefore, this research deconstructs the main subjects of murals and selects the indicators that help to reconstruct the status of women. Likewise, this section focuses only on the areas which are depicted in pre-modern murals and compares these visual representations with those from textual evidence. It was essential that this section investigated how mural artists placed women in their domestic sphere.

5.1.1 The Role of Mother

From the historical period, in South and South Asian Buddhist ideology, the concept of motherhood has been endowed as the highest social status of women, "The mother-child link was well established as a vehicle for religious symbolism" (Andaya 2002: 16). This section discusses the identity of women as mothers, as depicted in mural paintings of the period. The stages of motherhood as depicted in murals can be divided into two categories: child-bearing and child-rearing which are prioritized and highlighted in murals as a significant area of women's labour and life cycle. These areas are universal and assigned to women based on biological factors, however, the concept of 'child rearing as a gendered domestic task', is challenged by a consideration of the primary

sources of the research. This section shows how this had been practiced in pre-modern Sri Lanka through a comparative study.

Pregnancy is one of the outstanding stages of women's life both biologically and socially. There is ample visual evidence that depicts this specific phase of female life. It is outstanding that a number of temples provide instances of pregnant women and child births (Figure 39-41): in the visual registries of Queen Mahamaya, in life incidents of Buddha, *Tēlapatta Jātaka*, *Sāma Jātaka,* and the story of Patachara. The most common physical appearance attributed to pregnant women is the highlighted bumped tummy and a similar portrayal is presented in all the temples. The most notable fact regarding the presentation of pregnant women is the selection of the scene showing the visiting parents getting ready for the delivery. As textual sources imply, this is an ancient custom in Sri Lankan culture (Buddhadatta1959: 59-62). At the same time, visual images suggest the care and protection given to women at this stage.

> Scenes of parents with their infants are very often depicted by artists as a predominantly women role. In pre-modern Sri Lankan murals, breastfeeding is shown as one of the main responsibilities of the mother's role. Andaya dedicates a section of her research article to highlight the Buddhist perception towards 'the power of mother's milk' which asserts breastfeeding as the potent bond of mother and child and the explicit link of a mother's affection towards the child. (Andaya 2002: 22-24).

In his account on Ceylon, Davy stated that, "...Mothers almost universally suckle their own children, and for the long period of four or five years, either in part or entirely…" (Davy 1821: 287- 288).

> It is notable that a number of breastfeeding scenes are embedded into many stories by the artists of pre-modern murals and most corroborate Davy's statement, as the depiction of breastfeeding mothers was a very popular subject in pre-modern murals and other artforms (Figure 43-45). The prominent feature of this mothering act is that different kinds of postures were used to show women suckling their infants (Table 6) and the majority of the temples tended to depict the seated position as the most convenient and preferred posture. As mentioned by Davy, some of the children being suckled were not infants but in their early childhood. Though the original story may not have included the suckling of babies, the artist imagined and attributed that posture to women with children, even those children in their early childhood. Most of this evidence comes from Vessantara Jātaka. The number of representations also tells us about the popularity of this subject and how it links with the role of mother. Andaya identifies that there is a "healing power of mother's milk" (Andaya 2002: 22) providing evidence from Sri Lanka and South-East Asia by quoting a description from Vessantara Jātaka,

> "…when Maddi saw the children in the distance and knew they were safe…she sprinkled them with streams of milk from her breasts…The children rushed up to her, and they too fell senseless on top of their mother. At the moment two streams of milk flowed from her breasts into their mouths, and if they had not received so much relief, the two children must have perished, their hearts parched…" (Gombrich and Cone 1977: 90).

In this sense, it is clear that the "notion of [the] restorative power of mother's milk appear[s] to have struck a responsive chord in Southeast Asian societies" (Andaya 2002: 22). When the artists want to depict Mandri who is described as an ideal woman with motherly qualities in texts, they have certainly decided to show her role in the form of breastfeeding. The power of mother's milk may have encouraged the artists to highlight the power of motherhood in their visual representations. Likewise, the artists may have wanted to encourage contemporary women towards this practice. The strong relationship of women and breastfeeding is even confirmed by the portrayal of royal women who suckle their infants, while the king handled political affairs in the court, though Kiribamune claims that it symbolized the way in which the society kept women away from the official decision-making process (Kiribamune 2000: 477). The portrayal of royal women in the breastfeeding posture in murals could have been used by the artist to motivate the viewers by providing a role model. On one other hand, the conventional social background of the country also required such behaviour from women. The depiction of *Hattipāla Jātaka*, for instance, in the murals of Gangarma MV depicts a village woman who suckles infants, and according to the story she is referred to as "bahu putti" or the woman who has many children.[115]This projects an emotive message to the village community, encouraging the need to increase the population. On the other hand, Kiribamune's argument is based on the depiction of Degaldoruwa RMV (Figure 92) in the up-country, which was constructed under the patronage of King Kirti Sri. Most of the other depictions in mural across the country, which will be discussed in section 5.4, provide ample evidence for the active participation of women in political decision-making. At Degaldoruwa RMV, the portrayal of the queen in the act of breastfeeding, which is not described in the *Vessantara Jātaka* text, can be interpreted in three ways: as an empowerment of women by breastfeeding, as a desire of society towards the continuation of the royal line, or as a slap against the Kandyan Nayakkar

[115] According to the story she has seven children

rulers. The second and third arguments are strengthened by recognizing the barrenness of all the queens fetched by the Kandyan king from South India in the pre-modern times.[116] The people may have had a real desire for the continuation of the royal line, especially as the majority of the kings, except Narendrasinghe, were outsiders to the Sri Lankan throne who claimed the power due to the barrenness of the queens. In this respect, the artist may have been motivated to express social disfavour indirectly through the palace scenes of breastfeeding queens. The breastfeeding is a metaphor of boundless affection of a mother. The affection of mother to her children is strongly depicted in the attempt of Patacara to protect her children from many disasters (Figure 46). The portrayal of the role of women as mothers is a very strong potrayal, however, projected by the artists as the predominant female status within the household.

It is accepted that caring for children was one of the responsibilities of women in her universal gender role as mother (Nelson 1997:72). This social consensus is also depicted in pre-modern murals (Table 7; Figures 47-48) and remarkably men were also directly involved in child rearing (Figures 47-48), and this visual evidence is corroborated by cotemporary textual sources and folk literature,

> "As fathers and mothers, as sons and daughters, the Singalese appear in a more amiable light. Their families are generally small, one women rarely bearing more than four or five children: a fact that does not at all agree with the assertion that has been made, that the women of Ceylon are remarkably prolific. The care of the children is almost equally divided between the parents; and an infant is more frequently seen with its father than mother…" (Davy 1821: 287).

Davy's observation corroborates that child-rearing was the responsibility of both father and mother. Remarkably, visual representations provide evidence to strengthen Davy's account. The most amazing aspect of these scenes is that the original stories do not provide descriptions of the involvement of both father and mother in child care. The palace scenes in the murals, for instance in the story of *Vessantara Jātaka*, depict the King and Queen collectively and leisurely spending their time with infants (Figures 51-52). It can be argued that the common practice of pre-modern society, as noted by Davy,

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[116] All pre-modern Kandyan kings starting from Sri Viraparkrama Narendrasinghe, Sri Vijaya Rajasinghe, Kirti Sri Rajasinghe, Rajadhi Rajasinghe and Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe fetched their chief queens from South India and all failed to produce an heir *(*Abesinghe *et al* 1977*)*. See Chapter 1 section 1.4

may have motivated the artists to contextualize the story according to their respective social contexts.

So, why did men act as care givers in the private sphere during this time? In particular, men had to assume this duty as women performed a range of activities in the public sphere. As stated by Knox, husbands stayed at home caring for the child while their wives were away from the house. Knox also says women were away from home for activities such as fetching fire wood and water and cattle-rearing (Knox 1681: 93). Murals frequently depict the same circumstance, particularly in the narration of *Vessantara Jātaka* in which Mandri, the wife of Vessantara, goes to gather food in the forest while the two children were cared for by the husband. Not only do the descriptions of foreign travellers, but Sri Lankan folk literature, witnessed the workload of women who had children (Pagnaloka 1959: 135-136). Folk songs in the form of lullabies were sung by the care-giver of the child (most probably the husband) to appease the baby. These lullabies amplified the workload of the mother who is away at the time. Interestingly, these lullabies tell that the mothers performed duties outside the domestic sphere; according to one folk lullaby, the hand of the mother is full of fruits, she carries green leaves on the pouch[117] in her hip, a heavy load of firewood on her head. At the same time, a folk song which related to traditional craft, tells how the women who went to collect rush for mat-weaving hurries to get back home to prevent her baby from crying,

> "Let us go, elder sister, to gather rushes, already they have gone to the ran-minuvan (golden rushes) meadow," "If I go gather rushes, staying till afternoon, who will give milk to the baby" (*Pannam Katura* v. 12);
>
> "Then were the women ready to set out, dressed in clean white cloths: "I cannot leave my petty babe and go" (*Pannam Katura* v. 13);
>
> "Sister, why do you delay? if I go now the baby will cry and the boys will beat him, you go then, my sister, to tie up the rushes" (*Pannam Katura* v.17);
>
> "Sister, my baby called out for his milk, in my house there is always chattering and nagging" (*Pannam Katura* v. 28).[118]

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[117] Knox identifies this as "a small bill on the hip of the woman" (Knox 1681:89-90). This is made folding one of the upper edges of the cloth she wear to create a pocket

[118] From "*Pannam Katura",* a collection of folk songs on traditional mat-weaving. Coomarasamy enclosed this collection in the appendix of his book (Coomaraswamy 1908: 247-248)

Murals depicted a more or less equal number of scenes of the father and mother in child-rearing; sometimes the care giver is the mother or the father or both (Figures 51-52). In some murals, for instance in Bambaragala RMV, Vaduwawa (Figure 49a), the father uses a small toy to console the baby and it is a direct symbol of care giving. In the murals of Kelaniya, both father and mother, as a couple, give their attention to cradle the baby. All this evidence clearly demonstrates that both husband and wife were equally responsible for child care and this tendency is a common factor in both up-and low-country paintings. This provides evidence for women's empowerment relating to their involvement in domestic activities and beyond and how society understood her role in a wider context of such activities. Such evidence challenges the notion of a 'gendered division of labour' with 'women in the private sphere and men in the public sphere' in pre-modern Sri Lanka.

5.1.2 Housewifery and Domestic Activities

The popular belief is that women's responsibility was limited to the domestic sphere and the house is universally identified as a gendered space. This social notion has been in practice worldwide for centuries (Gilchrist 1999:32; Nelson 1997:87). The Buddhist consensus also assigned household management to women.[119] Knox outlines house hold affairs of women, explaining the workload assigned to women.

> "…The womens Housewif[e]ry is to beat the Rice out of the husk; which they do with an Ebeny Pestle before mentioned. They lay the Rice on the ground, and then beat it, one blow with one hand, and then tossing the Pestle into the other, to strike with that. And at the same time they keep stroke with their feet (as if they were dancing) to keep up the Corn together in one heap. This being done, they beat it again in a wooden Morter to whiten it, as was said before. This work tho it be very hard, belongeth only to the women: as also to fetch both wood and water. The wood they bring upon their heads, the water in an earthen Pot, placing it upon their hip. To the women also belongs a small bill to cut Herbs, Pumkins &c. Which she is to dress which bill she lays upon the ground, the edg

[119] Honer examines the *Singālōwada sutta* v. 30 and provides a detail description about the role of Buddhist wife " her duties are well performed, by hospitality to the kind of both, by faithfulness, by watching over the goods her bring, and by skill in industry in discharging all her business" (Honer 1930: 41-42)

> upwards, and sets herself upon a Staff or handle to hold it fast, and what she meaneth to cut, she lays it upon the edge, and shoveth it on it…" (Knox 1681:88).

Knox further mentions that, "To fetch wood out of the Woods to burn, and to fetch home the Cattle is the Woman's work" (Knox 1681:91).Cordiner also states that, "it is women's business to bring home fire-wood, to cook and to take care of the cattle" (Cordiner 1807: 108). According to these quotations, there are several responsibilities which were assigned to women by society and denominated as "Women's work" or "Women's business" in pre-modern Sri Lanka. This implies a gendered division of labour prevalent at the time or some tasks were recognized as strictly feminine.

Davy presents a more detailed picture of the division of labour stating that,

> "the economy of [the] Singalese family is very simple, and occupation of the different members of it well defined. the more laborious operations of agriculture fall to the lot of men, - as ploughing, banking, &c; and the lighter to the women,- as weeding, and assisting in reaping. The care of the house, and the management of the household affairs, belong almost exclusively to the latter, and constitute their peculiar duties. It is their business to keep their dwelling neat, to prepare the meals of their family, to milk and spin. These remarks relate chiefly to the middling classes. In families of rank, the ladies lead nearly a life of idleness; and, in poor families, the life of females is one of extreme drudgery" (Davy 1821: 278-279).

As described in textual sources, the responsibilities of women can be listed as follows: managing household affairs, keeping the neatness of the dwellings, preparation of food, water fetching, fetching firewood, cattle rearing and milking, weeding and reaping in the fields. The murals of the period depict most of these domestic responsibilities. The first five are discussed below and the last two are discussed under the section on the public sphere.

5.1.3 Housewifery: Cooking

Food preparation is one of the gendered tasks universally assigned to women, and the kitchen where they prepare food is seen as a gendered space (Nelson 1997: 87-90). Women are often shown in murals performing the task of cooking, which is described as women's work in texts. It is prominent that the artists of the time depict a number of scenes associated with royal kitchens, and this is discussed below under the section on

services at the royal palace. There are some other cooking scenes of village women, however, the most common showing the placing of an earthen pot upon bricks. Bambaragala RMV, Vaduwawa, Dambawa TV, Gangarama PV, Sudarshanarma PV, Kataluwa PV and Uttamarama PV all present evidence of cooking. One of the notable factors of these cooking scenes is the assistance provided by the husband in the preparation of family meals. In Gangarama PV and Purvarama PV the husband is also in the kitchen in the role of an assistant involved in preparing food, while the wife actively plays the role of the cook (Figure 55). In the mural of *Ummagga Jātaka*, at Uttamarama PV, the husband is helping the wife to light the fire (Figure 55). According to the story, he was a dastardly husband and the artist highlights this by using irony and incorporating him as an assistant to the wife. What does this mean to the viewer? It could be argued that helping or working in the kitchen was regarded as an unmanly trait for a husband? The majority of other illustrations, however, demonstrate that cooking was a task performed by both men and women and the kitchen was not solely a gendered space of women within the household.

5.1.4 Housewifery: Fetching Water and Firewood

Since cooking was prescribed as women's work, procuring the necessities of cooking was also assigned to women. Fetching water and firewood are prominent among such tasks. As noted by Knox (1681: 89-90) and Cordiner (1807: 108) those women's tasks were shown in the murals. The artists of many temples tended to select the scene at the well of *Vessantara Jātaka*, where Amitatapa goes to fetch water. Kiribamune interprets that the gathering around the well is an informal network of women. She further stresses that, "exchanging news and views around the village well is a familiar pre-occupation among women a scene captured by the Kandyan painter. An instance where the woman asserts herself, pushed by the village women is once again part of the same record where the young wife is encouraged to slap the aged husband" (Kiribamune 2000: 476). Kiribamune's suggestion can be emphasized by the hand gestures of the women which symbolize the interference towards the family matters of Amitatapa (Figure 56a and b). The *Vessantara Jātaka Kāvya*,[120] as a representation of folk culture, presents a detailed

[120] *Vessantara Jātaka Kāvya* is the poetic version of *Vessantara Jātaka* composed during the pre-modern era in Sri Lanka by a folk poet (Gamlath 1990)

narration of the incident at the well and how other women criticized the behaviour of Amitatapa's husband and encouraged her in different ways to gain the power of the house by suppressing her husband (Gamlath 1990: vv. 362-380). The selection of this event in a number of places and highlighting the scene indicates that women organized to increase their empowerment. As suggested by Kiribamune, the gathering of women can be interpreted as a women's empowerment network which challenges the existing power structure of the household.

According to the depictions, all women fetched water in earthen pots placing them upon their hips. This posture is entirely compatible with the accounts of Knox (1681:89-90) and Cordiner (1807: 43-45) which explained the difference between the posture of men and women in carrying water. The only different posture of fetching water is depicted in Ranvella PV (Figure 56c), showing Amaradevi in *Ummagga Jātaka* carrying a pot of water on her head. However, both these were recognized as the carrying postures of women (Figure 57). Cordiner observed that men placed loads across their shoulders (Cordiner 1807: 45); the mural of *Ummagga Jātaka* in Ranvella, shows a man carrying a woman on his shoulder, while the woman in *Cullapaduma Jātaka* in Kotte RMV and *Andhabhūta Jātaka* in Subadharama PV carries a man in a basket on her head. This corroborates the load-bearing postures of men and women as described in textual sources, and it can be argued that there were gendered postures in load bearing.

Collecting fire wood is depicted in two temples in the low-country. Purvarama PV presents a scene of two women picking firewood (Figure 58). Fetching firewood was a collective task for women and was very often the subject of folk songs too (Pagnaloka 1959: 136 and 186). These folk songs advised women not to go to the forest alone but as a group, and this is supported by the visual evidence at Purvarama PV of two women collecting firewood. A woman fetching a bundle of firewood for the home on her head is depicted in murals of Ranvella PV, and this again reminds us of the descriptions of Knox and others regarding domestic workloads of women as well as the gendered posture of bearing loads. In that sense, it can be suggested that society in pre-modern times prescribed this as an obligation of women.

5.1.5 Housewifery: Serving

There is a long tradition of Sri Lankan history that womenfolk ate their food after the males of the household had finished their meals. Robert Knox observed such Kandyan eating habits (Figurs 59-60) which confirm this,

> "They eat their Rice out of China dishes, or Brass Basons, and they that have not them, on leaves. The Carrees, or other sorts of Food which they eat with their Rice, is kept in the Pans it is dressed in, and their wives serve them with it, when they call for it. For it is their duties to wait and serve their Husbands while they eat, and when they have done, then to take and eat that which they have left upon their Trenchers.During their eating they neither use nor delight to talk to one another" (Knox 1681:87).

Davy also describes the order of having food as,

> "the master of the house, the father of the family, is first served; at his solitary repast he is waited on by his wife, who helps him and supplies him with what he wants. The turn of the mistress of the house is next" (Davy 1821: 282).

Davy further says that, "amongst poor people of low caste these distinction are attended to and father, mother and children ear together; occasionally, even in families of the highest ranks, the master and mistress of the house associate at meal, but is not approved of; it is considered uxorious and indecorous" (Davy 1821: 282). Davy's statement, that husband and wife ate together was considered uxorious and indecorous, and was not approved by society, demonstrates that the Kandyan social custom was for women to wait until their husbands had finished and to serve or wait upon their husbands while they were eating.

The temple murals of the time also portray women waiting to have their food until after their husbands, as in the lunch scene of *Uraga Jātaka* at Medwala TV (Figure 2a). The farmer eats his lunch while other members of his family have to wait. In the story of Soreyya Situ, Purvarama PV, a woman serves food for a male visitor (Figure 59c). This can be identified as the gender hierarchy of the family, conversely, the visual imagery of Pilikuttuwa RMV and Subodarama RMV in the low-country, presents the very rare scene of both husband and wife having a meal together (Figure 59a-b). This may be a symbolic way of conveying gender equality prevalent in some specific locations or special ocation of elites, such as in the up-country at wedding ceremonies, as noted by Knox. He mentions that both bride and bridegroom eat together on the same plate which

denotes equality of status of husband and wife (Knox 1681: 94). It is clear that the custom of husband and wife taking lunch together was practiced on specific occasions.

5.1.6 Housewifery: Cleaning

Keeping the household tidy and clean is also prescribed as a responsibility of women (Nelson 1997: 87). Davy noted the practice of this notion in pre-modern Sri Lanka societies (Davy 1821: 278-279), however, there are limited numbers of portrayals which illustrate it as a woman's task. Remarkably, the opportunity to understand the involvement of both men and women in cleaning is provided by murals in the low-country, and the majority of the cleaning scenes depict men in postures of cleaning. The majority of temples provide such instances of male cleaners (Figures 61-63) while fewer female cleaners are shown. This demonstrates that the intention of the artists was to imply cleaning was a more masculine task particularly, in the low-country. Though cleaning was recognized as women's work in ancient societies, the visual representations of pre-modern Sri Lanka present an entirely opposite picture.

The portrayal in the murals of Ranvella PV and Talawa RMV of the woman in the posture of washing her husband's feet is a rare and significant depiction (Figure 64), though it is not very unusual in literary sources in Sri Lanka. *Kāvyashēkaraya*[121] advises women on how they should treat their husbands. According to the *Kāvyashēkaraya* the wife should wash the feet of the husband when he returns after a journey (Dharmarama 1966: v27).[122] It is important to note that this practice existed even in nineteenth century folk literature, which that says that women should arrange a water pot to wash the feet of their husband (Pagnaloka 1959:180). Ranvella PV, is situated close to the temple where the writer of *Kāvyashēkara* lived[123]. The popularity of this advice and the content of the book among the people who lived in the area may have encouraged the artist to present such a role of women as an ideal wife to the husband.

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[121] Written in the sixteenth century by Rev. Totagamuwe Rahula (Dharmarama 1966)

[122] Wimaladarma cites a detail description of advice in *Kāvyashēkera* toward women (2003 : 93-96)

[123] Rev. Totagamuwe Rahula lived in Telwatta RMV in Galle, low-country.

5.2 The Position of Women in the Public Sphere

It is interesting to note the traditional custom as recorded by Knox, practised during the auspicious time of New Year where, "… both Men and Women do begin their proper works; the Man with his Ax, Bill and Hough, and the Woman with her Broom, Pestle, and Fan to clean her Corn…" (Knox 1681: 96). The starting of work for New Year and the tools symbolically suggest the nature of work assigned to men and women, and that there was a gendered division of labour. The association of women with broom, pestle and fan symbolizes that the domestic sphere was the space for women allocated by social convention. This section draws out the various other roles women played apart from performing their household duties. It was common for Sri Lankan women who lived in pre-modern times to fulfill the role of ideal wife or housewife, however, both visual and textual evidence open up a window to observe the role of women in public sphere.

5.2.1 Agriculture

"In historical and agricultural societies women plant, weed, and harvest crops" (Nelson 1997: 88). This universal picture is compatible with Sri Lanka as an agricultural country,

> "The economy of Singalese family is very simple, and the occupations of the different members of it well defined. The more laborious operations of agriculture fall to the lot of the men, - as ploughing, banking, &c; and lighter to the women, as weeding, and assisting in reaping…" (Davy 1821: 278-279).

From the early historic period the main occupation of Sri Lanka was agriculture. During pre-modern times, Knox, Davy and a number of other foreign travellers (Davy 1821: 278-279; Knox 1681: 11-12; Cordiner 1807: 108) as well as local textual and folk literature, provide sufficient evidence to build a picture of the agrarian society of Sri Lanka. Davy's account describes the nature of the division of labour in traditional agriculture. Folk songs elaborately describe the significant contribution of women in reaping paddy (Pagnaloka 1952: 250-259). In contrast, some folk songs of the period demonstrate that women stayed in their paddy land even during the night to protect their crops. The songs tell us that king Rajasinghe met one woman who protected her crop in the night when the king paid a visit in disguise. He was very much pleased to see the

bravery and labour of the woman and granted her "*Deyyanne wela*"[124] as a royal deed (Pagnaloka1952:156-157). At the same time, Cordiner states that, "the men in general, labour but little, where rice is not cultivated; and all the drudgery of life falls upon the women" (Cordiner 1807: 105). This is corroborated with other textual sources which discuss female labour in other crops.[125]

In the portrayal of women in agriculture in murals, the *Uraga Jātaka* painting panel of Medavala TV in the mid-eighteenth century presents instances of female labour in agriculture (Figure 65). This painting clearly stresses that the division of labour in agriculture was decided by gender in Kandyan society. As described in textual sources, the men of the family (father and son) were directly involved in farming while women contributed toward household activities. Carrying food for men who worked in the field was a responsibility of the women. It was assigned to female slaves in some families and the *Uraga Jātaka* story depicts the female slave carrying food on her head (Figure 65b). The young woman also carries some agricultural equipment on her shoulders, which was not mentioned in the original story. This may have been a symbolic way of expressing that women also helped in some activities after they had finished their domestic workload.

The depiction of agriculture is a rare subject in the murals, however, there are few scenes which illustrate events in paddy fields, though none of them incorporates female figures. What is the reason behind this? On one hand, all these events portray men in working postures such as ploughing. It is considered as one of the heavy labours assigned to men, as noted by Davy. Since the particular subject directly represents ploughing, the artists would keep away women from such scenes considering the division of labour in their own socio-economic contexts. On the other hand, the subject represents an agricultural event of royalty. It may be that women were not employed in the service of royal agriculture and thus would not be shown.

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[124] This area is located in the vicinity of Kandy town. King Rajasinghe was named as Rasing Deyyo and the meaning of '*Deyyanne wela'* means the paddy land of King Rajasimha.

[125] *Kurakkan Mālaya* (278-284), *Nelum kavi* (248-259), *Pal kavi* (190-208), (Pagnaloka 1952)

5.2.2 Dairy and Cattle-Rearing

The literary sources strongly suggest cattle-rearing and dairy work in Sri Lanka was entirely handled by women and recognized as gendered labour that was women's work. Cordiner shows that taking care of the cattle was women's business (Cordiner 1807: 108) and fetching cattle was the women's work (Knox 1681: 91). Local folk songs also record the involvement of women in this activity (Pagnaloka 1952:135).

There are two milking scenes in murals which depict Sujata's alms-giving in Dambawa TV and Bambaragala RMV, Vaduwawa (Figure 66). The visual depiction of a woman milking is similar to the portrayal of a village woman's daily life in income-generating activity. The original story of Sujata does not provide a picture of Sujata who involves in milking. The involvement of contemporary women in milking may have encouraged the artist to contextualize his visual description. All these bear evidence that cattle-rearing and milking was one of the gendered tasks assigned to women in that society.

5.2.3 Women at the Royal Palace

Mural paintings of pre-modern Sri Lanka mainly used *Jātaka* stories as subjects and the inclusion of the life incidents of royalty in most of the stories are prominent. The origin of these stories date back to the pre-Buddhist era, and extended versions were composed, modified and contextualized during the late medieval and pre-modern periods in Sri Lanka. At the same time, society embraced these stories in their own way and the visual language they produced provides remarkable instances as to how the people of the period altered these stories within their own socio-cultural contexts. It is important to note that the visual representations of the royal family in court scenes project a picture of the Kandayn royal house and associated women at different stages. Below, this study carefully examines the different women's roles associated with the palace.

5.2.4 Women at the Royal Palace: Ombudswomen or Duggannā Unnānse (Duggannā Service)

This service was recognized as one of the important services which mainly concerned the security and the life assurance of the king. For that reason, there was a separate

department at the Kandyan palace known as the "Duggannā Department"[126] for the service of the royal palace (Doily 1812: 180). Generally this position was held by men, however Lawrie states that a considerable number of women also held the same position during pre-modern times. For instance, Attaragama Duggannā Unnānse (Lawrie 1898: 44, 82), Moragaha Maditte Duggannā Mahatmayo (Lawrie 1898: 51), Arawe Duggannā Mahattayo (Lawrie 1898: 67, 601), Aluthgama Duggannā Unnānse (Lawrie 1898: 112, 764), Mampitiye Duggannā Unnānse (Lawrie 1898: 274, 528), Harasgama Duggannā Unnānse (Lawrie 1898: 331), Duggannā Unnānse (Lawrie 1898: 731,764,172), Alutgama Duggannā Unnānse, a Tamil lady (Lawrie 1898: 230), Duggannā Kumarihami (Lawrie 1898: 452), and a Duggannā woman who was the mistress of the king (Lawrie1898: 878). These can all be traced as women who held this position. Lawrie, in his gazetteer records other services done by women in the Duggannā Department (Lawrie 1898: 214), such as "Woman in Duggannā service" (Lawrie 1898: 172) and "Girl who worked in Duggannā department" (Lawrie 1898: 214).

These women sometimes worked as attendants to the Queen, at the same time most of them were concubines of the king and they were called '*Yakaḍa dōli*[127] or *Duggannā Unnānse'*. Among them, Mampitiye Duggannā Unnānse is recognized as a powerful woman who was the concubine for both Kings Kirti Sri and Rajadhiraja (Lawerie 1898: 274, 528) in the eighteenth century. According to the literary sources these women come from very prestigious family backgrounds and their economic stability was very high; the primary literary sources such as *Udarata Vitti* and the *Gazetteer of the Central Province* record that all of these women came from up-country Kandyan aristocratic families. In palace scenes of murals, it is noted that there are some other women besides the queen who may be recognized as Duggannā women, and such female figures are featured in pre-modern murals. Most frequently they were portrayed inside the palace without assigning any kind of service gesture. At the same time, they covered their bodies with elegant cloths and jewelry and stayed somewhat away from the womenfolk of the palace. The *Palle vāsala* and *Mada Vāsala* were the official houses allocated for such concubines and the security and architectural features of buildings suggest the

[126] *Duggannā* the one who takes troubles (Codrington 1924: 15)

[127] *Yakada doli* a king's mistress (Codrington 1924: 65)

King's desire to keep them separately from others in the palace. When the king needed their company he may have visited these places. The visual images, particularly in Subardrarama PV and Sunandarama PV (Figure 67), clearly demonstrate the difference between the chief queen and these concubines by their body modifications. The chief queens were brought from South India and they were depicted with a special garment '*moṭṭakkili'* which covered the whole body, while the mistresses were local elite women and who cover the bodies with less garment in relation to queens.

5.2.5 Women at the Royal Palace: Personal Attendants to the King and Queen

Female attendants provided personal assistance to the king and queen, and the aim here is to understand the nature of those services and to evaluate the gender identities of these services, as projected by artists at different localities. It is noted that there are depictions of services conducted by both men and women in palatial scenes of pre-modern paintings. The traditional roles visualized in art by artists of different places provide an opportunity to understand the social archaeology of the functional positions at the palace. Fortunately, the literary sources of the period enhance the information about the presence of royal attendants in the period, describing details about their services and the payments received.

The personal attendants depicted in murals can be divided into several categories based on the nature of the service they afford (Table 8). A considerable number of temples where these royal scenes are depicted in their murals serve as witness for these people. The royals were accompanied by one or more persons for the purposes of guiding, protecting, providing security, showing honour or providing any kind of personal assistance. These services could be identified as follows:

I Cool and refresh air/fanning

II Providing shade

III Showing honour

IV Escorting

Air/fanning: First, it is here discussed about the services which were performed by women. The purpose of fanning was to cause air to blow upon the king and queen in order to keep them and their vicinity cool and refreshed. Different kinds of devices such

as fly whisks (*Chāmara*), fans (hand-held fans (*Avāna*), palm-leaf fan with a long handle (*Vaṭāpat*), and punkahs (*Pankāwa*) were used to accomplish this task (Figures 68-70). The nature and frequency of the services rendered by both men and women for the King and Queen as depicted in the visual representations are listed in Table 8. An analysis of that data shows that most of the fly whiskers were women. This striking observation indicates that fly whisking by women may have been an active tradition of the royal palace in Kandy. The main entrance of "*Maha Vāsala"*, the royal court of the king, was also decorated with two stucco carvings of female fly whiskers which illustrate the very strong relationship of these women in the royal court (Figure 69d). The other important aspect of this service is that both king and queen received this service with the king being flanked by two female fly whiskers. On such occasions, it may indicate honour instead of a practical cooling effect. Likewise, there are some events that illustrate only the queen received the service of a female fly whisker while she is together with the king. This can be interpreted as the presence of the King in the Queen's chamber of where she regularly received this service. The most striking idea that emerges from the data is that this service is identified as a gendered service almost wholly performed by women at the palace.

Providing cool air by using a palm-leaf fan with a long handle (*Vaṭāpata*) was also a very common method visible in palace mural scenes, and was entirely performed by women at the palace. In other words, this is also recognized as a gendered service by women as the receiver and the doer.

The hand-held fan (*Avāna*) was adapted from the folding fans which were very popular in Europe during the eighteenth century, a time popularly known as the golden age of the folding fan (Steele, Valerie 2002). This was not a Sri Lankan traditional method of moving air, but this fashion was popularized in the colonial period. This is one of the colonial impacts on Sri Lankan culture and initially it was a fashion and a symbol of noble women. In low-country paintings, however, it went beyond fashion and was used as one of the ways of refreshing air for the royals as conducted by the attendants, and was also a gendered service of royal attendants. Except in the murals of Ranvella PV, where the scene of a man fanning the king with a hand held fan, all other palatial scenes show that only women performed this service. The practice of using fans by European and Sri Lankan women may have encouraged the artists of the low-country to employ

this as a female service. The queens most often received this service and only two examples bear witness to kings receiving it.

The most powerful mechanism of moving air out of an enclosure is the punkah (*Pankāwa*).[128] This is significantly depicted in up-country paintings. Though *Pankās* were depicted in scenes, examples from Asgirigedige RMV and Velikotuwa PV demonstrate that this was operated by a man (Figure 72a-b). This was considered to confer an important status because the responsibility of operating the *punkāh* was a male-oriented service. The traditional punkah used in the royal palace of Kandy is still exhibited in the archaeological museum there (Figure 72 c) and it is strikingly similar to those depicted in murals. Particularly, in every instance, this is highlighted as a male-oriented service. The rationale of the artists may comply with the notion that women cannot perform heavy tasks since they are physically weaker than men. Davy also emphasizes this with the division of labour attributing lighter work to the women in agriculture (Davy 1821: 278-279).

Providing shade: Murals also show the raising of parasols which provided a canopy designed to protect against rainor sunlight. Umbrellas or *chatra* were used for this purpose and both men and women were involved in this service (Figures 73-74). The prominent feature of this position is that men held umbrellas to the kings while women held them for the queens. *Awu Atta*[129], a traditional way of providing shade by a folded palm leaf, was also used for the same purpose and they were always carried by men and the service was only received by the king. It is traditionally recognized as a means of providing not only protection but also to show honour. Again, this illustrates a male-oriented service for the benefit of the king.

Respect: Some attendants carried an object called the *sēsat*,[130] a circular flat object connected to a pole and colourful flags (*Dwaja*) that showed respect to the royals. In

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[128] a large fan consisting of a frame covered with canvas that is suspended from the ceiling for circulating air in a room

[129] " a circular fan attached to a pole, carried at the side of chies" (Codrington 1924b: 6)

[130] *Sēsata* is a circular fan usually of cloth and richly ornamented, set on a long pole. It was carried in processions at the side of elephants carrying relics, etc (Codrington 1924b:55).

murals, they were also commonly carried for the king by men (Table 8). Women carrying *sēsat* to the king are distinctly recognizable in murals of Ranvella PV, and in Bambaragala RMV a woman carryies *sēsat* to the queen (Figures 69b 70f and 73a). The patron of the Ranvella PV is recognized as a woman and Bambaragala RMV is situated in a neighbouring village where women were highly empowered economically with the income-generating craft activity of traditional fan making.[131] These two economic factors may have fostered the artist's depiction of women involvement in honorary services which were traditionally allocated to men. Except for the evidence of these two places, all other examples confirm the male authority of the service.

Murals of Bambaragala RMV, Vaduwawa and Ranvella PV also present female attendants who helped the queens in bathing, and both places reflect a similar narration, that is, two women helping the queen by providing water using a water pot. At the same time, Bambaragala RMV, Vaduwawa murals also depict a woman carrying the clothes of the queen on her head. These visual representations reminds the viewer of the attendants who worked in *Ulpengē*, the royal bath where the queens bathed, still visible at the Royal palace, Kandy. Literary sources of the period, such as the *Gazetteer of the Central Province* (Lawrie 1898) confirm the employment of female attendants at royal baths providing such assistance to the queens.

Female attendants were employed in escorting the queens when they went out. When queens travel by palanquins, two or four female attendants would accompany them as depicted in murals. Dambawa TV, Subodarama RMV, Niyadawanaya RMV, Sudarshanrama PV, Karapitiya Sudarshanarama PV, Valihinda and Valalgoda RMV have examples of such female attendants (Figure 106a). The murals also depict some female attendants sitting just near by the queen inside the palace, and they must be the Queen's personal attendants. Lawrie notes (1898: 117, 331, 687, 852) women, namely Pitawala Mahatmayo and Udugama Mahatmayo who have worked as queen's personal attendants. The nomenclature of "*mahatmayō"* reflects their high social status. Furthermore, Lawrie reveals information about the wages and grants received by these

[131] The economic status of women was identified by me through a participatory observation of the village Galatare, a neighbouring village to Bambaragala RMV. This is the main income-generating activity of the village and the women's labour is predominant.

women for their services at the Queen's palace. For example, Punci Ethana, the daughter of Ethana of Imbulmalgama received land for service at the queen's palace (Lawrie 1898: 380). Records of women who worked in the royal palace to carry loads in journeys and the wages for their service are also worthy of note (Lawrie 1898: 855).

Finally, the most common work by women at the palace was meant for the queens and concubines. Most of the services provided for the king were offered by men, but the services relating to the personal comfort of the king were always rendered by women. It is remarkable that most of the light services and services linked with personal comfort were entirely assigned to women, whilst the services related to paying respect and honour and handling heavy equipment were carried out by male attendants. As a result, it can be argued that the positions represented by the artists were always based on gender and social norms relating to the division of labour. The role-reversal of employment of women in male-dominant and men in female-dominant services, can be highlighted in those temples which were constructed under the patronage of a woman, and in temples situated in villages where women were economically empowered.

5.2.6 Women at the Royal Palace: Wet-Nurses or Milk Mothers (Kiri Ammā)

There was an ancient tradition of employing wet-nurses when the mother of the child was unable to nurse the infant herself (Bonfante 1997). Wet-nurses have been called "*kiri ammā*" or milk mother in Sri Lankan culture for centuries. The name of this woman symbolically indicates that her main responsibility was to feed infants. Andaya suggests the role of wet-nurses was accorded a prestigious position in the South-East Asian cultures and was a symbol of generosity (Andaya 2002: 23).

There are depictions of wet-nurses in pre-modern Sri Lankan mural paintings. They are usually featured in the life story of Lord Buddha, especially when depicting the incident of the untimely death of Queen Maya soon after she delivered Prince Siddharta and when depicting the infancy of Prince Vessantara of *Vessantara Jātaka*. Wet-nurses were prominent characters in both these stories. There are descriptive accounts of wet-nurses in both classical and folk literature in post medieval and pre-modern Sri Lanka. This section compares the visual representations of wet-nurses in the royal palace with textual narrations.

One can argue that the role of wet-nurses in literature is fabulous. Both local and foreign textual sources refer to some women who were wet-nurses by profession and even refer to a wage and grants for wet-nursing services in the Kandyan kingdom (Lawrie 1898: 442). The account of a wet-nurse who served during the time of King Sri Vickrama Rajasinghe (1811), as noted by John D'Oyly in his diary, clearly demonstrates the close relationship between the King and his the wet-nurse (Codrington 1917: 3 and 77). The Gazetteer of the Central Province (Lawrie 1898) refers to a wet-nurse named 'Kiri Etanā', alias 'Kiridun ammā', who was the great grandmother of Gmage Punchirala who lived in the village of Kiralagampaha, in the area of Pallegampaha in Harispattu. This account records the royal deed of the lands given by the king for her service (Lawrie 1898: 442). On the other hand, according to the *Mahabinikman Kāvya*[132](Seneviratne 1967: v 164), it is said that King Suddodana gave thousands of gold coins to his wet-nurse (Seneviratne 1967: v. 61). The Kataluva PV *Vessantara Jātaka* painting register illustrates that Prince Vessantara also distributed bags of gold coins to each wet-nurse (Figure 75d) and in Sailabimbarama PV the King donates a necklace worth thousands of gold coins to a wet-nurse. All this evidence clearly shows the status of this profession and how it was valued as a royal service in the palace.

Literary sources indicate that recruiting wet-nurses was not just based on the ability to breast feed. The textual sources outline the criteria for selecting women for this position (Figure 75a). *Muga Pakkha Jātaka* presents the most extended description of the criteria for selecting a wet-nurse as follows,

> "He gave moreover sixty-four nurses for the Bodhisatta, all free from the faults of being too tall, &c.,… with their breasts not hanging down, and full of sweet milk. If a child drinks milk, sitting on the hip of a nurse who is too tall, its neck will become too long; if it sits on the hip of one too short, its shoulder-bone will be compressed; if the nurse be too thin, the babe's thighs will ache; if too stout, the babe will become bow-legged; the milk of a very dark nurse is too cold, of one very white, is too hot; the children who drink the milk of a nurse with hanging breasts, have the ends of their noses flattened; some nurses have their milk sour, others have it bitter, &c. Therefore, avoiding all these faults, he provided sixty-four nurses all possessed of sweet milk and without any of these faults…" (Cowell 1907: 02).

[132] A Sinhalese folk anthology composed in the eighteenth century

At the same time, the *Pūjāvaliya* discusses how wet-nurses were selected for the infant Siddharta by King Suddhodana, who invited women from two royal families, *Shākya* and *Kōliya* (Ganavimala 1951:147). This indicates that the members of royal families often served as wet-nurses for the royal family. The *Mahabinikman Kāvya* also points out the same qualification as women (Seneviratne 1967: V.60). The use of similar criteria in pre-modern times is confirmed by Lawrie's account of Kiri Etanā and her family background, as Nayakkars who were rulers of the Kandyan kingdom and South India in the period (Lawrie 1898: 442).

The *Pūjāvaliya* outlines the six physical features that would disqualify a woman from serving in this position due to the effect they would have on the infant. They are:

I Too tall- the baby has to lift up his or her head to suckle which would cause the baby's neck to be too high

II Too short - the baby has to bend his or her head to suckle and this would cause the baby's waist to become too large

III Too fat - when such woman holds the baby in her waist it will develop bandy legs,

IV Too weak - when such woman hold the baby it will develop lean legs,

V Too fair - they have very warm milk in their breasts and the baby will have more salt in the body

VI Very dark - they will have cold milk in the breasts and the baby will have a freckled body

Wimaladharma also cites five of these characteristics (Wimaladharma 2003:78) and this helps us to understand the physical features of the women who served as wet-nurses in the period. The *Mahabinikman Kāvya* remarkably describes a similar selection procedure (Seneviratne 1962:v.60) while the *Dēvadatta Varune*, from the eighteenth century, also briefly mentions similar criteria of medium height and light skin colour (Nandaratana 1991: 97).[133] This study examines whether the artists of mural paintings also considered these physical characteristics when they painted wet-nurses. Dambawa TV and Niyandawane RMV, Karagampitiya PV, Purvarama PV, Sailabimbarama Dodanduwa PV, Kumara MV, Dodanduwa PV, Ranvella PV, Sudarshanarama PV, Godapitiya and Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda all depict visual evidence of wet-nurses

[133] Wimaladarma also cites *Mahabinikman Kāvya* and *Dēvadatta varune*'s description in his explanation on the qualifications of wet-nurses (Wimaladarma 2003:78-79)

in murals. Generally speaking, the majority of the artists used light colours (yellow) for the complexion of wet-nurses in murals. In Subodarama RMV, Ranvella PV and Sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda, however, wet-nurses are depicted as too fair or dark using the colours of red and blue. In the scene depicting the selection of wet-nurses by King Suddhodana, there are two women of yellow complexion, one woman is painted red and the other one is painted blue. This is in line with the textual evidence for the criteria for selecting suitable wet-nurses. In the next step, it is important to compare the size of the body in relation to the textual sources. The figures of wet-nurses depicted by most artists are of medium size. Likewise, all the figures are same in height and in size. Consequently, it tells us that the artists of these three places tended to change the dimensions established by the authors of literary sources.

According to the literary evidence, the wet-nurses should have possessed a royal family background.[134] It is clear that the artists also had the same perspective, as a comparison of the garments and jewelelry of wet-nurses, together with those of women from the royal families, indicates that the wet-nurses depicted also came from the same elite background. In *Mahabinikman Kāvya* (Seneviratne 1962: 60-61), it is said that King Suddodana gave very shiny garments, and ample jewelry and in *Muga Pakkha Jātaka*, princely dresses (Cowell 1907: 2) as gifts for wet-nurses. Similarly, the murals also project wet-nurses who were embellished with jewellery in their ears, neck, chest, hand, and waists. Nevertheless, the lack of richness in jewellery in comparison with the account in *Mahabinikman Kāvya*, markedly shows that a multitudinous variety of jewelelry was common in mural paintings.

The responsibilities of wet-nurses such as breast-feeding, child-rearing, holding the baby, fanning it and providing comfort to it are all depicted in mural paintings. It can be argued that the post of the wet-nurse was one of the highest ranks in service in the palace during the pre-modern times in Sri Lanka (Figure 75b, c, e). They maintained a high social status since they came from prestigious families. In the final analysis, the appearances, social status and the royal deeds confirm the economic status of the women who held the position of wet-nurse in the palace.

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[134] Young nobles (Cowell 1907: 2)

5.2.3 Women at the Royal Palace: Royal Kitchen Maids

Working in the royal kitchen was part of the royal service in the Kandyan Kingdom. There is a considerable number of visual representations from both up-and low-country Sri Lanka which reflect scenes of royal kitchens in respective stories. At the same time, the literary sources both local and foreign, provided an opportunity to understand the comparative nature of the service of women who worked in the royal kitchen.

Vessantara Jātaka which reflects the generosity of Vessantara is the most common mural which includes a depiction of a royal kitchen in the majority of temples such as Bodhimalkada PV, Hindagala RMV, Pilikuttuwa RMV, Sunandarama PV, Kelaniya RMV, Kumara MV, sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda PV, Uttamarama PV and Veligodapola TV. Likewise, *Tēlapatta Jātaka* and *Kurudharma Jātaka* also provide such kitchen scenes in Mulkirigala RMV, Kotte RMV, Samudragiri RMV and Purvarama PV (Figures76-81and Table 9).

It is essential to examine the female contribution made towards the daily activities of the palace which appear in these visual narrations, and duties in the royal kitchen held a prominent place in this subject. In particular, the association of both men and women in kitchen scenes is visible in mural paintings of the period. Fascinatingly, Robert Knox makes an interesting note about the women who worked in the royal kitchen of King Rajasinghe II (seventeenth century) entitled "Handsome women in his Kitchen", which draws our attention to several important matters of the role of kitchen maids,

> "He hath many Women belonging to his Kitchin, choosing to have his Meat dressed by them. Several times he hath sent into the Countreys a Command to gather handsome young Women of the Chingulayes to recruit his Kitchin, with no exceptions whether married or unmarried and those that are chosen for that Service never return back again..." (Knox 1681: 47).

The role of women in charge of the royal cuisine suggests the gravity of their responsibility. The mural paintings depict several kitchen scenes where women cook, but they do not exactly show that women prepared food for the king. According to Knox, women had to be handsome, and almost every painting projects a similar narration about the physical features of women, particularly the figures in Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda. In general, however, the appearance of the women in murals is somewhat mature. Knox also asserts that both unmarried and married women were recruited for this position. There is a possibility, therefore, for the presence of mature women in the

service. One of the obligations of the service was that women were obliged to stay in the palace. Vimaladharma does not agree with Knox and he explains that, "the observation made by Knox that the cook women at the royal kitchen were never allowed to return to their families, must be conjectural or hearsay, or a peculiarity in the administration of the king Rajasinghe" (Vimaladharma 2003: 123).

Ralf Peries also records that there were six women who worked in the royal kitchen providing such services as collecting firewood and carrying water (Peries 1956:52). It is notable that the analysis of workloads borne by kitchen maids, as visualized in murals, also confirms similar activities, such as providing necessities to prepare foods, carrying water and different stages of cooking: scraping coconut, cutting, stirring up curries, lighting fire, grinding and adding ingredients (Table 9; Figures 76 and 78). Scraping coconut, stirring up the rice pot and serving were the outstanding services carried out by women (Figure 78). Though the literary sources do not highlight the female contribution to serving food, these murals very often show that serving also was performed by women. Likewise, men are never shown being involved in activities such as carrying water, scraping coconut, lighting fires, grinding and adding ingredients, however, stirring up the cooking pot and serving were shown being performed by men (Table 9). The actual involvement of men in royal kitchen may be a reason for the depiction of male cooks in murals, and this suggests that cooking was not gendered work.

According to Lawrie the position of the cooking woman was traditionally known as "*Mulutengē Mahatmayō*" and it is a respectable form of address. Lawrie mentions several such women who provided their services to the royal kitchen.[135] The woman called "*Kudā Mulutangē Mahatmayō"* demonstrates that there were women who belong to different ranks in the kitchen. Peries describes "*Kōralē Mahagē"* who received three *ridīs* as the salary while others got two *ridīs* (1956: 53) which also confirms the hierarchy and different ranks of kitchen maids. Similarly, murals show female figures who had a prominent personality among other kitchen maids. The women depicted in the kitchen scene of Kotte RMV, for example, is bigger in size and wears special

[135] Mulutengei Mahatmayō (207), Nugawela Mulutengei Mahatmayō (652-654), Mulutengei Mahatmayō (658), Mulutengei Mahatmayō (870) and Kudā Mulutengei Mahatmayō (207) were women who worked in the royal kitchen. Medawāsala (184-185), women worked in the Queen's kitchen (648) and woman worked in the royal kitchen of King Kirti Sri (185) (Lawrie 1898)

garments covering her full body, while the other three women in the same kitchen are smaller in size and cover only the lower part of their body.

At the same time the women who worked in the kitchen of the Queen's palace tells us how women were employed in several kitchens within the palace. In other words, the King and the queens were offered food prepared separately in different kitchens within the palace complex. The description of "*Dunuwila Mahattayō*", who provided vegetables for the palace (Lawrie 1898: 300), also demonstrates that women were involved in different services to the royal kitchen.

Next, it is important to explore the nature of payments received by women who worked in the royal kitchen. Women were paid two *ridīs*[136]monthly for cooking (Peries 1956: 52). The note on the woman "*Ambagaha Gedara Ranmenika*" who owned the "*Dodankara gedara panguwa"* for the service of cooking and cleaning the garden of the kitchen (Lawrie 1898: 351) shows they were given special tenants to maintain the proper management of this service. It is interesting to know that a woman named *Punchi Etana,* who worked in the Queen's palace, received lands (Lawrie 1898: 380) which demonstrates the different methods of remuneration received by kitchen maids.

Comparatively, the female attendants who provided their services to the king and the queen were adorned with elegant clothes and jewelry while the women who worked in the royal kitchen had garments and jewelry of lesser value. This suggests that the kitchen women had a lower social status than those of the personal attendants to the King and Queen. Even so, they were paid in lands and money for their service and they had economic stability in society. The association of both men and women in the royal kitchen is clearly visible in both mural paintings and textual sources. There were gendered services in the kitchen, though these murals also illustrate some shared or common activities performed by both men and women.

5.3 Women and Cultural Activities

It important to note that there is a considerable amount of visual evidence which indicates the participation of women in cultural activities in pre-modern Sri Lanka. It

[136] A value of standards

can be recognized in two ways: performing in cultural festivals as dancers and musicians, and visiting cultural events. This tells us that the society of the time did not prevent women from participating in such activities.

According to the literary evidence, there was a group of women who worked in a special department for the entertainment of the King. Many writers refer to an organization named "Natum Ilaṃgam", "The Naitoom-elangame' mohandiram nilame had superintendence of the kings' company of dancers, who according of the Malabar fahsan, were women" (Davy 1821: 156). According to the textual sources, they were South Indian women with a person in charge to handle the activities of the organization. At the same time, as textual sources show, they were paid for their service. It is clear that women used their aesthetic skills for paid labour in pre-modern Sri Lanka, and that women were involved in entertaining activities such as music and dancing. In the palace, there were girls who belonged to '*natum ilaṃgam'*, and at the same time, there were temple dancers,

> "women attended the perahera of Natha devale. They are women of [the] temple" (Davy 1821: 172)
>
> "they were attended not only by the women of the temple, but likewise by the ladies of the court and by the young wives and daughters of the chiefs, dressed in royal apparel, presented to them by the king" (Davy 1821: 173).

These women contributed to festivals, and were involved in dancing, drumming, blowing trumpets and playing western musical instruments. In low-country murals, women's contribution to dancing is remarkable, whereas it is somewhat uncommon in up-country murals. It is remarkable to note the difference in the nature of the dancing items of the low-country and up-country in terms of garments and gestures (Figure 82-90). In the low-country, dancing women fully covered their upper bodies whilst the up-country dancers covered only the lower part of their body. Ranvella PV, Purvarama PV, Mulgirigala PV, Kumara MV, Sailabimbarama PV and Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda depict examples of low-country cultural events. At the same time, the female musicians are also visible in Ranvella PV and Mulgirigala RMV murals. In particular, the story of *Tēlapatta Jātaka* includes such elements. In the up-country, Degaldoruwa RMV, Ridi Vihara and Hindagala RMV show dancing events and women who play drums.

One of the noticeable characteristics of cultural activities of this period is the South Indian influence. It impacted on Sri Lankan culture in two ways. Most of the South

Indian temples which were built between the medieval and pre modern periods, introduced the tradition of stone foundations which were decorated with such dancing and music scenes. Sri Lankan artists also directly imitated this tradition and replicated such foundations in their temples. In addition, the importing of South Indian craftsmen for building Sri Lankan temples in the period also led to the replication of South Indian cultural influences on Sri Lankan culture. Gadaladeniya RMV and Niyamgampaya RMV are such examples which have stone carvings of dancing women. Similarly, the lowest painting panels of some image houses are decorated with the scenes of processions in which dancing women display their skills, for example Ranvella PV, Sunandarama PV, Sailbimbarama PV and Kumara MV. This practice was found commonly in the low-country temples, where artists preferred the tradition of presenting dancing women, but not in the temples of the up-country.

As depicted in murals, it is notable, that the same kind of cultural activities were performed at wedding feasts. Purvarama PV shows the dancing women and women who play music instruments. It is remarkable that the dancing costumes and music instruments are entirely European and these demonstrate how European culture impacted on Sri Lankan culture particularly in southern coastal areas.

5.4 Female Slaves or Servants

Slavery is another important aspect of the division of labour in the pre-modern period. The murals of the time illustrate the female servants who work for nobles, though they cannot be defined as slaves. Evidence for the roles of women who worked as servants in elite houses was obtained from textual sources, which provided direct evidence of slavery, particularly that of women. Therefore, the potrayal of female servants is examined against textual sources in order to understand the position of these women in pre-modern social contexts.

According to Knox, the social status of slaves was not as bad as other textual sources suggest,

> "The Slaves may make another rank. For whose maintenance, their Masters allow them Land and Cattle. Which many of them do so improve; that except in Dignity they are not far behind their Masters, only they are not permitted to have Slaves. Their Masters will not diminish or take away ought, that by their Diligence and Industry they have procured, but approve of it, as being Persons capable to repose

> trust in. And when they do buy or otherways get a new Slave, they presently provide him a Wife, and so put him forward to keep House, and settle, that he may not think of running away. Slaves that are born of Hondrew Parents, retain the Honour of their degree" (Knox 1681:73).

At the same time, the statement of Knox reveals an important aspect of slavery and women: how the status of the mother determines the freedom of her children with regard to slavery, "If a Bond-woman has Children by a Free-man, the Children all are Slaves to her Master: but if a Bond-man has Children by a Free-woman, the Children are free: For the Children are always as the Mother, whether Bond or Free". (Knox 1681:103). Lawrie tells us about the unbearable work load and the tragic profile of a female slave in Kandyan territory,

> "…A slave girl at Wattegama Walawwa bore a number of children, but as she had too much to do in taking care of her master's young children, her own to the number of eight were buried as soon as they were born; but after her master's children were grown up, she had four children, whom she was allowed to bring up. These four children were distributed by her master among his relations. Their descendants, two women and six children, were valued in 1822 at 730 ridis, or 333 rixdollars" (Lawrie 1898: 923).

The mural paintings of Medawala TV portray an excellent picture of a female slave or servant[137] and it shows many aspects of her social status (Figure 65b). According to the painting panel, there are three different scenes of *Uraga Jātaka* in which the figure of a female servant is depicted. The artist follows several methods to demarcate the difference in social status between the female servant and her mistresses. The social identity, social relation and social hierarchy are visualized using the following contrasts:

a) Placing the female servant behind the mistress while walking with her mistress. According to the painting, the journey is led by the eldest women followed by younger women. The female servant is situated behind the mistresses. Therefore, this visual narration implies that the servants did not have permission to overtake their masters. At the same time, the walking order is determined according to the age and social status.
b) Carrying the food of the masters on the head of the servant; most of the Kandyan noble families possessed slaves in their houses to perform domestic activities.

[137] Cowel who translated the *Uraga Jātaka* into English uses the term 'female slave' (1897). In contrast, the author of the *Pansiya Panas Jātaka*, the sinhala version of the book prepared in the thirteenth century uses female servant instead.

They were depicted in the form of their service postures to emphasize their role and status. The artist of Medawala TV preferred to follow this popular tradition and portrayed female slaves in a posture of carrying a box of food covered with a white cloth on her head and a spoon in the hand. The artist also stresses the duties and obligations of a female servant representing her as a load bearer.

c) Exposing the upper body of the female servant even in going out. Two noble women wear long sleeved embroidered jackets to cover their upper bodies while the female slave is represented with an uncovered upper body. According to textual sources, low caste women were not allowed to cover their upper bodies (Knox 1681: 71).

d) The quality of dress of the female servant. The noble women wear elegant, decorated garments in both scenes of carrying food to the field and the farmer having. The elite women of these paintings wear a long cloth similar to the Indian "*Dhōti"* to cover the lower part of their bodies. It comprised two stages, tidily folded. At the same time, the female servant wears a very simple, poor quality cloth to cover her lower body. This suggests that there was a restriction in wearing decorative clothes for low caste people. The artist used clothing as a tool of distinguishing social stratification.

e) The lack of jewelry of the female servant in comparison with her mistresses. Noble women are equipped with fine earrings, bangles and necklaces in this painting. In contrast to the elites, the female servant has been decked with three simple bangles and earrings. It may have been another restriction on low caste people in society. Elderly women in this picture are also not adorned with earrings. As a result of the heaviness of earrings, their ears became damaged and they could no longer wear such jewelry.

f) Situating female servants outside the house on the occasion of the arrival of a visitor. The *Uraga Jātaka* painting presecribs a picture of some traditions and customs of Kandyan society on how women behave when welcoming visitors to their houses. According to visual representations, this was always decided by age and class. The eldest woman of the family came forward to the verandah to receive the message sent by the farmer with a neighbour. The daughter or the daughter-in-law stays inside the house and the female slave is kept outside. It

may have been a social consensus of Kandyan culture that young women stayed inside the house when strangers are present. Moreover, the servants are kept away from visitors as outsiders of the family and they were not allowed to interact with family visitors.

g) Placing the female servant in the background with their head turned to the opposite direction of the master while he was eating. The intention of the artist is to prevent the female servant from looking at the meal of the master. Holt (1996: 76) claimed that the son's wife observes the funeral function. It is clear that this woman is not looking at the cremation, but is the female servant whose head is turned away from the meal, co-incidentally in the direction of the cremation. This misconception was discussed in the second chapter reviewing the scholarship of Holt (See page 29).

h) Applying a different colour to the female servants' body. Changing the complexion was one of the most prominent methods used by artists to demarcate the diversity of social stratification. The same approach had been followed by the Medawala artist in his *Uraga Jātaka* panel. He uses a different colour for the complexion of female servants. The female servant is portrayed three times in the panel and she was painted in light pink while the others, both men and women, are painted in yellow. The use of a pink colour here draws attention to some issues when it is compared with the principle of ancient artists mentioned above. There was a popular belief of general folk that the low caste women had a bright complexion and they attract men with it (Selkirk 1844). This bright complexion is called "low caste white" and the privileged class used this term to devalue the status of the low caste people. The artist in this case tried to show the bright white colour in light pink. At the same time it can also be argued, since Sri Lanka had been suffering threats of European colonialism for several centuries and Kandyans hated the colour of European white people, that they took this opportunity to show their objection. It might have been a certain way to devalue the Europeans by giving their colour to a slave who performed services to the Kandyan aristocracy. The application of pink colour for low castes has not been a popular practice in sculptured art of other religious places in the Kandyan region, but it can be noted that the traditional masks used for *Kōlam*

dancing in the period applied same pink colour to indicate Europeans. A Sri Lankan *Kōlam* mask of a European soldier displayed in British museum (Reg no:AS 1927.0108.1) is one example of this.

i) Reducing the scale of the female servant in relation to her master and mistresses. The scale was utilized as one of the most common and distinctive features for establishing social status (Renfrew 1984: 24-28). The variation in scale can be seen in both scenes of *Uraga Jātaka* and the artist portrayed elites in large figures and the smallest scale has been assigned to the female servant.

The other prominent visual representation of female servants is Sujata's alms-giving. The status of the female servant, Punna, was discussed in the fifth chapter. It introduces the important idea that religious privileges for servants were restrictedat the time. In both up-country paintings and textual sources, the female servants visited religious places not for their own benefit but to provide comfort for their masters. Finally, it can be argued that the position of female servants as depicted in murals is low in relation to elites. The artists purposely demarcated the different status of female servants in many ways as explained above, demonstrating the nature of the social hierarchy and social relations prevalent in pre-modern society.

5.5 Women Working in Shops

In murals of the pre-modern period, scenes which illustrate shops demonstrate another way women contributed their labour in the public sphere. The painting panel of *Tēlapatta Jātaka* is a remarkable presentation of this aspect of women. Temples such as Hindagala RMV, Sailabimbarama PV, Sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda, Telwatta RMV, Uttamarama PV, Velikotuwa PV, Mulgirigala RMV and Kotte RMV bear witness for the women who provided different services in the stalls (Figure 91). Though the artist depicts the women's labour as work in the shops, it is essential to explore contemporary sources to ascertain whether the women actually rendered such services. The examination of literary sources helps us to verify this matter,

> "I have often observed a woman place her gift in the bowl with an air of utter indifference, if not contempt, turning away entirely without reverence. And sometimes a woman may be seen, especially in a fruit-shop, where monks, of course, expect to get something, picking out from her bunch of plantains, not the best nor yet the worst, but such as represents a due balance between thrift and religion…" (Copleston 1908:263).

Copleston describes a woman who works in the shops and how she offers plantains to a Buddhist monk. Copleston's description directs our attention to women shown in the posture of picking plantains in the murals of Hindagala RMV, Velikotuwa PV and Uttamarama PV.

According to the visual representations, women served as cooks, stewards and receptionists and all of them were involved in serving food to men. There may have been a demand for women to work in shops and feminine beauty may have attracted them to the shops. At the same time, the management skills of women were utilized for such activities. All the gestures and postures in such murals demonstrate that women have given active labour in their working atmosphere. In some scenes, both men and women worked in the shops whilst some other scenes displayed only women. This suggests that women handled commercial activities on their own.

Sinhalese folk songs also mention those who work in shops and people who were attracted by their beauty and conversation (Pagnaloka 1959: 322). Classical literature such as *Sæḷalihiṇi Sandēshaya* (written in the fifteenth century) also elaborately describes the feminine beauty of women who worked in shops (Senanayake 1972).

5.6 Decision-Making Authority and the Power of Women

The authority to make decisions is a strong indicator of empowerment (Batliwala 1994 and De Silva 1979). It is remarkable that the pre-modern murals are coupled with some visual evidence of the power of women. The power status of women at different stages can be identified in these sources. This section examines women in two different power spaces where decisions are taken: the royal palace and the household. Though the iconography is not an actual reflection of the power status of society, the visual evidence fosters an understanding s of women's empowerment.

It is notable that the murals of the time often depicted palace scenes and the figures of kings and queens were often incorporated into the scenes. These were examined to analyse messages about power relationships. The political empowerment of women can be understood through the political participation of women as depicted in murals. As discussed in Chapter One, the most important aspect of Kandyan kingship was its matrilineal inheritance, and the beginning of the Kandyan dynasty is linked with a powerful female character, Keerawelle Kumarihami (Dewaraja 1988: 18-19). In the

seventeenth century, Kusumasana Devi, alias Dona Catherina, emerged as the most powerful woman of the country and was recognized as the only heiress to the throne (Dewaraja 1988: 18-19). The Portuguese also came to know about her inheritance and in order to capture the power of Sri Lanka, they baptized under the pretence of ensuring her protection (Dewaraja 1998: 19-20). Political marriages served as one of the outstanding areas of power. The sister of Dona Catherina was married to Prince Darmapala, King of Kotte (Abesinghe *et al* 1977: 18-19). The marriages of Dona Catherina also significantly demonstrated her power and how women were used by Kandyan rulers[138] to claim and establish their power. King Wimala Darma Suriya I (1590-1604), and his successor King Senarat (*1604-35*) who had no heir to the throne, both married Dona Catherina by custom to establish their power in Kandy (Dewaraja 1988: 19-20). After the death of Dona Catherina, who was the real heir to the throne, King Senarat entered into incestuous marriages with the two daughters of Dona Catherina by his brother.[139] This demonstrates the power of women in the royal line. The description of *Mandārampura Puvata* (Lankananda 1996: v. 257) of the political mission of King Senarat to Batticala, in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, also notes the participation of Dona Catherina in the political mission, which indicates the degree of power status held by Dona Catherina.

All the rulers of Kandy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fetched queens from Madura, South India and all of them were barren. The absence of an heir to the throne created an opportunity for the brothers of the Queen to become the king, suggesting that the queens had real power in the political arena of the Kandyan Kingdom. The kings had children from concubines who were from local elites (Abesinghe *et al* 1977). In the reign of King Kirti Sri, the local aristocrats strived to appoint Pattiye Bandara, who was the son of the King by a local concubine, but the attempt failed because of the status of the mother (Abesinghe *et al* 1977; Dewaraja 1977). Though the father of Pattiye Bandara had royal status, he was not recognized as a successor to King Kirti Sri. This tells us that the status of the mother was the only accepted qualification for claiming power. Similarly, in a power vacuum where kings had no issue from the chief queens,

[138] See section 1.3

[139] See section 1.3

the brother of the chief queen would succeed to the throne (Abesinghe *et al* 1977; Dewaraja 1988). This context implies that the power lay with the Queen in the pre-modern political history of Sri Lanka.

The next question goes to the heart of whether the role of queen, as depicted by artists of pre-modern murals represented historical fact. Kiribamune claims that,

> "women were completely shut out from official government positions. Although the wives of the kings were not part of the formal decision making structures, they did find opportunities to assume the role of power-brokers. A Jataka scene in a temple painting where the king confers with his ministers while the queen sits by his side suckling her infant child is to my mind a telling scene. This is not the ceremonial setting of the king and queen with state officials. Although her domestic role is accentuated, the queen is not disinterested in [the] official decision making process. That women have found indirect methods to gain power and influence demonstrate the lack of direct access to formal politics - a concern in most of South Asia" (Kiribamune 1990: 477).

Kiribamune's argument mainly focuses on the depiction of Degaldoruwa RMV in the up-country (Figure 92). The visual evidence of other places, however, illustrates a different story. Figures of queens in murals were depicted with postures and gestures which strongly suggest assertiveness, confidence and power in the majority of the temples (Figures 93-95). The figures of queens were also placed in the pavilion where the King handled the ruling activities, and the hand gestures demonstrate the participation of the Queen in decision-making. At the same time, the murals of Ganekanda PV present an entirely different story. Here, the artist places the Queen in front of the King, when they sit in the palace to receive guests. The hand gestures of the queen in most of these scenes suggest that she determines the function and well-being of society. Therefore, the visual evidence challenges Kiribamune's argument and shows that women were politically empowered. Although they did not act as rulers of the country, they did contribution to political decision-making.

Next, attention goes to the power exercised at the household level as depicted in pre-modern murals. The available limited evidence (Figure 96) suggests shared power and responsibility between men and women. The hand gestures of the husband and wife in a scene of conversations support this idea. As discussed in the section on women's roles, we can assume that the economic self-reliance of women had an equal power in decision-making at the household level. The visual evidence of *Vessantara Jātaka*

provides us with an interesting instance of the power status of women at a grass-root level. As suggested by Kiribamune, the scenes depict the village well, reflect the networking ability of women (Figure3a, 56a-b). This female network encourages the women to challenge the existing power structure which prescribes female behaviour to be passive, as recipients of male domination. The role of Amitatapa in *Vessantara Jātaka*, after she connects with the female network of the village, is ironically and enthusiastically depicted by the pre-modern artists. The visual evidence of Telvatta RMV, Nagavimana PV, Bodhimalkada PV, Arattna RMV, Asgirigedige RMV and Sunandarama PV, significantly depict the scene where Amitatapa thrases on her husband (Figures 97 and 98a). Not only the artist, but also the poetic version of *Vessantara Jātaka,* composed by the folk tradition as *Vessantara Jātaka Kāvya*, presents this incident in a similar way. Ironically, the posture of the husband, which shows him lying down or kneeling at the feet of the wife with the gesture of folded hands which begs and prays for his life, completely abased his masculinity. Moreover, the inscribed captions associated with the scenes highlight the naive personality of husband. Eventually, the husband, Brahmin Jujaka, changes to become dastardly getting permission from the wife when he goes out of the house and kneeling at her feet and worshipping his wife (Figure 98) The behaviour of Amitatapa shows that she refuses sexual union with her husband (Figure 98c) which challenges the typical gender hierarchy, by giving her control over sexual matters. Can this be interpreted as a genuine empowerment of women? As discussed in Chapter 2, this can be identified as directly reflecting the objections of the Sinhalese towards rulers of Hindu origin and the Hindu custom of unsuitable marriages. According to the story, the very old Brahmin Jujaka marries a very young girl, Amitatapa. In this sense, it may be a criticism by the artist on the child marriages practiced in India.

5.7 Women and Education

The wider body of recent literature asserts that education leads to greater empowerment of women (Batliwala 1994). This section mainly focuses on the approach of the artists toward women's education. Educational background reflecting the intellectual capacity of women was an uncommon subject in the mural paintings. Generally speaking, according to the folklore, women were only supposed to accomplish the duties that had

been prescribed by society, which had some limitations and educational restrictions. Correspondingly, it is also noteworthy how the Sinhala society devalued female intelligence by conveying it in a proverb, "women's wisdom is equal to the length of a spoon-handle" There was a strong conviction that women were not supposed to be empowered with education (Perera 1997: 7). Fortunately, there are a few scenes which covertly present a certain kind of picture of female education and intelligence.

Ummagga Jātaka, the most compelling evidence occasionally reflecting the intelligence of women, was depicted in some temples in the low-country, namely Ranvella PV, Subodaramaya RMV and Uttamaramaya PV (Figure 99). Amara Devi, the outstandingly intelligent woman of the relevant story is even depicted as being involved in judiciary affairs in the royal court, most important is the episode of Amara Devi resolving a fraud, which was depicted in both Ranvella PV and Uttamarama PV. This evidence projects the power and potential of women in problem solving. One can question why the artists of these particular places tended to represent this subject or the rational for representing the aforesaid event. It seems likely that there was an explicit link between *Amrasekera Lamateni* (Lady Amarasekera)[140], who lived in Kataluwa as the patron of Ranvella PV, and *Daso Upasaka Amma* (laywoman Daso)[141], who contributed money to the painting of a panel of *Ummagga Jātaka* in Uttamarama PV, and this may have influenced the selection.

The Sattubatta Jātaka painting in Degaldoruwa RMV (Figure 100a) provides visual evidence for female education. In this scene, an equal number of male and female students learn at the feet of a teacher, the traditional mode of teaching in historical Sri Lanka. However, this scene helps to show some inconspicuous areas of female education in the past. To begin with, the seating style (either side of the teacher) was allocated based on gender; males and females sit separately on either side. This gendered seating pattern has been in practice from the early historic period (Buddhadatta 1951). Kiribamune claims that this narration reflected gender equality by showing an equal number of men and women listening to a learned man reading from

[140] This name is inscribed on a granite plaque at Ranvella PV premise mentioning her as the patron of the temple and paintings

[141] This name is inscribed on *Ummagga Jātaka* painting panel in Uttamarama PV

an ōla book (Kiribamune 1987). Other evidence also demonstrates gender equality. According to Lawrie (1898), the statistics of literacy in men and women who lived in the Central Province in 1881 and 1891 demonstrates a clear picture of literacy (Table 10; Figure 101). Analysis of Lawrie's statistics demonstrates that only 6% women were literate by 1881-1891

All the foreign visitors noted the discrimination against women, highlighting the negligence of education for women and the low level of women's literacy. Nevertheless, some women of high social status and others after marriage, had a chance to be educated,

> "Reading and writing are far from uncommon acquirements, and are almost as general as in England amongst the male part of the population, to whom they are chiefly confined: they do not form a part of female education, and in consequence, the very few women who can read and write have taught themselves after marriages" (Davy 1821: 237-238);
>
> "The greater part of the men can read and write; but these accomplishments are not communicated to the women" (Cordiner 1807: 120).

Accordingly, it shows a huge gap and an inequality between male and female education in colonial Sri Lanka.

It is important to account for the visual representation of Degaldoruwa RMV which depicts an equal number of male and female students. Two assumptions can be made to explain this circumstance. Firstly, there is a necessity on the part of the artist to balance the panel by showing an equal number of men and women flanking the teacher. Secondly, it is the personal experiences of the artist about his native place, Balawatwala, that made him represent it thus. The name of the village draws attention to a famous poetess named "Balawatwala Mahatamayo"[142] who lived in the reign of King Rajadhi Rajasingh (eighteenth century) of Kandy. Furthermore, the palm leaf manuscript of the poem "*Anurāgamālaya*" stored in the British Museum collection[143] corroborates Lawrie. The experiential knowledge and the celebrity of this poetess may have encouraged the

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[142]"…his (Balawatwala Disawa) wife was the poetess Balawatawala Mahatmayo, who flourished in the reign of Rajadhi Raja, whose poems are extant, one of them being '*Anurāgamālaya'* (Lowrie 1898: 87). The completion of art and architecture of Degaldoruwa belongs to the same time period

[143] "*Anurāgamālaya*: An anonymous poem is 65 quatrains, distinct from the erotic poem known by the same title, which latter is said to have been composed early in the last century by the Kandyan lady named Balawattala Mahatmayo…" (Wickremasinghe 1900: 114)

artists to raise the ratio of women learning to equal status beyond that of the actual circumstances in the Central Province.

Samudragiri PV suggests another aspect of female education in the visual register of *Kurudarma Jātaka* (Figure 100b-d). The desire of the King to learn the religious doctrine, directs him to consult everybody in the palace to have it written down. Interestingly, the mother and Queen of the King and the prostitute of the town are also included among the people who fulfill his requirement. In Samudragiri PV murals, all three women are shown writing on a palm leaf manuscript by using a stylus. The artist could easily have dropped this from his visual narration; normally, not all the events of a story are selected. The prominence of educated women of southern Sri Lanka may have inspired the artist to bring all the writing scenes of females into the painting panel.

It is important to consider whether there was a certain kind of a restriction on women's education at the time. The biography of Gajaman Nona provides substantial evidence for this. Gajaman Nona was a low-country woman who lived in the pre-modern period, acquired her literacy by disguising herself as a male while she was having her traditional education. She was a well-known poetess who communicated with Sir John D'Oyly through poems. D'Oyly valued her poetic talents and granted her a village (Gunasekera 1991). "Punchinona", the story about an enthusiastic girl whose education was discouraged by the traditional society, shows how she overcomes the social barriers (Langdon 1884). Rona Hamine and Ranchagoda Lamaya were also very famous poetesses who emerged in the colonial low-country (Hewawasam. 1966: 452) Once Rona Hamine, who was a member of the aristocracy, was brave enough to challenge a Buddhist monk with a poetic reply against his misbehaviour (Hewawasam. 1966: 452). Female figures seen in paintings and literature often belonged to elite social groups in colonial Sri Lanka, and it is suggested that only a select social group had the privilege of learning.The most compelling literary evidence, however, reveals that women belonging to the *Navandannā* caste, considered as one of the lower castes, were literate. The *Hatthipāla Jātaka* poetry written by the poetess Kurakkan Gedara Bawalat, including the compositions of *Pututorana Naccire* and *Maddama Naccire* (Pagnaloka 1952), reflect the creativity and the literacy of women beyond the elites.

In summary, the education and literacy of women are rare subjects in mural paintings of the period, though they do provide limited evidence for the literacy of elite women in both the up-and low-country. Furthermore, literary sources provide us with information on women from other social groups too. The patronage and the social background of the artists may have influenced the visual representations of female education. At all events, it is clear that there was gender discrimination and gender inequality in the field of education in pre-modern Sri Lanka.

In summarizing all the areas discussed above, it can be understood that women actively performed their tasks in both public and private spheres. At the same time, the woman's involvement beyond the stereotyped roles in agriculture and dairy suggest their economic empowerment and contribution to the household economy. Mural paintings clearly stress, however, that the division of labour in agriculture was decided by gender in Kandyan society.

The representation of pregnant women, child delivery, breast feeding and child-rearing established the mother-offspring relationship and selfless care of mothers. This was the most respectable and prestigious status given to women considering their potentiality of creating and nurturing the next generation.[144] I suggest this status as an indicator of women's empowerment was gained through their motherly qualities and potentialities. At the same time, it can be argued that child caring was not a strictly feminine activity but was shared between the father and the mother, providing the flexibility with the male performing childcare as part of a collective task; a quasi-feminine and quasi-masculine activity. This implies us that the people of pre-modern Sri Lankan societies practiced gender neutrality in child caring.

The majority of other evidence associated with cooking scenes asserts the involvement of both men and women in general and particularly in the royal kitchen. Men both as cook and as assistant to the wife are depicted in the murals. The murals suggest that the kitchen was not a solely gendered space for women within the household and that cooking was not a gendered or woman's task. The mural scenes at the village well,

[144] There is a popular saying in the folk tradition in Sri Lanka that the hand of the mother which rocks the cradle governs the world. This shows that the motherhood was an accepted powerful role in Sri Lankan culture.

where women fetch water and exchange ideas, suggests the capacity of women in organizing against male domination. Moreover, these depictions of village women's community can be interpreted as a women's empowerment network which challenged the existing power structure of the household. Though cleaning was recognized as women's work in ancient societies, the visual representations of pre-modern Sri Lanka present entirely an opposite picture by depicting a predominant number of men in cleaning postures.

The visual evidence for palace service demonstrates that heavy work and administrative positions were performed by men. At the same time, it is remarkable that most of the light services and services linked with the personal comfort of royalty were entirely assigned to women. The service of the women in the royal kitchen, however, and working as wet-nurses can be highlighted as areas of women's economic self-reliance.

Though we cannot identify women as the rulers of the country, the paintings suggest that political authority was strongly connected with women. The majority of the palace scenes show women in decision-making and the active involvement of women in politics. women's education was significantly very low, however, even though some women, both elite and commoner, show their literacy. The Colonial impact changed this aspect of women's lives by providing more opportunities though opening education to women; one of the chief ways women at the time could be empowered.

Finally, it can be understood that women in pre-modern times had a varying profile of gender roles, both social and economic in a wide range of activaties, in both the private and public spheres. Likewise, this study stresses female empowerment by a considerable number of indicators of empowerment such as economic security, involvement in household decisions and participation in politics.

Chapter 6. Social Relations and Women's Identity

This chapter mainly focuses upon the gender identity of women and the gender relationships in their social lives as depicted in the murals of pre-modern Sri Lanka. It is obvious that the iconography does not entirely reflect a complete picture of contemporary society, however, the social consensus of the time may have influenced how artists shaped their visual imagery. This chapter examines how artists visualized men and women as different genders, interacting with each other in their social lives. Likewise, the discussion considers how society defined the identity of women in art. As the murals of the period do not project a complete picture of the position of women in their social lives, this study mainly discusses the areas depicted in murals which reveal information about female identity and social relationships. At the same time, since the iconography does not always reflect the reality, this study questions the portrayal of the visual representations and compares it with evidence from other sources.

The first section of this chapter discusses marriage, one of the important events in a woman's life. This research examines the nature of all the wedding scenes depicted in murals, the gender of participation, gender relationships and the hierarchy of the wedding ceremony. The second section explains the travelling methods used by women and the social implications regarding the utilization of each method of travelling. At the same time, the study identifies the privileges enjoyed by some women in using these methods, the restrictions limiting their journeys and the social consensus behind those restrictions. The next section investigates how artists presented the women's sorrow and the last two sections discuss obeisance and the nature of representing the female body. The importance of studying the nature of sorrow as depicted by artists is that it gives us the opportunity to become familiar with the social conformities of gender stereotypes and gender identity. This study examines whether or not the artists of the time had a pre-conceived idea about the sensitivities of women. This chapter presents an overview of social and gender relationships and gender identity prevalent in pre-modern times, and provides us with the opportunity to open a window on the ideology of the artist and of society towards gender and social relations. It discovers whether or not traditional gender stereotypes influenced the visual representations. The discussion on the expressions of grief creates an opportunity to understand how society of the time

identified some characteristics, such as crying, submissiveness, sensitivity and emotional behaviour, as feminine.

6.1 The Marriage

> "Marriage has been described as a physical, legal and moral union between a man and a woman in complete community of life for the establishment of a family. It is thus the sanction for that way of life, which make possible the procreation of new lives and the perpetuation of the race in the social set up of a community. It also helps the human being to satisfy his emotional, cultural and economic needs. As marriage marks the beginning of the first human society, the family, it is the most ancient institution in mankind. One must, therefore, expect that around it will grow ideals and traditions of a racial or cultural group" (Peiris 1962: 1).

As Peiris emphasized, marriage was an important organization of society, it is also one of the most important events in the life of a woman; hence the adult woman starts her multifaceted contribution towards society as a wife, a daughter-in-law and a mother-to-be, after marriage. Nevertheless, the artists of the pre-modern Sri Lankan murals did not select the marriage scenes as a direct theme, though a number of marriage ceremonies, that signifies some cultural notions of contemporary society, appear in visual representations. In particular, marriage ceremonies have been highlighted in low-country paintings. In the pages that follow, this study will examine how the artists of the period mould these marriage scenes from stories composed a few centuries ago, into their own social contexts.

Twenty-nine marriage scenes, depicting wedded couples from different social strata, have been identified in the mural paintings examined for this study. They represent members of royal families, elites, Brahmins, merchants and servants. The iconographic analysis of these images provides evidence regarding differing attitudes to matrimony amongst different classes. Some examples of popular married couples who were depicted in wedding scenes in different stories are as follows:

- Yashodara -Siddhartha (life of Buddha)
- Phusati-Sandamaha, Mandri-Vessantara and Amitatapa-Jujaka (*Vessantara Jātaka*)
- Princes of Panchala-Vedeha, Amara-Mahawshada (*Ummagga Jātaka*)
- Vasabha Kattiya - King of Kosala (*Kattahāri Jātaka*)
- Irandati-Purnaka (Vidura Paṇḍita Jātaka)
- Revati-Nandiya (the story of Layman *Nandiya*)
- Patachara - servant (the story of *Patachara*)

The primary data analysis suggests that the majority of artists were inclined to visualize some important rituals and ceremonies related to marriage, such as the giving of marriage, the wedding feast, conducting the bride and the arrival at the groom's house. In Kelaniya RMV, Telwatta RMV and Ranvella PV, the scenes also depicted events before marriage; for instance, the discussions, agreements and other arrangements for the wedding ceremonies between elders of the two families. The purification of the bride before the feast is depicted in Dambewa TV and Dambulla RMV, (Figure 102) and these scenes reflect the gender hierarchy in society. For instance, the involvement of the bridegroom and the father of the bride in decision–making symbolises the practice of discouraging or even preventing women from involvement in such ceremonies. Davy stated that, "every man marries and marries young, and the wife not his own but of his father's choice" (Davy 1821: 284), and notes the silence of mother. Knox also noted the same family gender divide at a marriage (Knox 1681: 94). However, it is interesting to note that, in the murals of Kelaniya RMV, there is evidence of the involvement of the mother in such family matters (Figure 104a-b). The power of women in families in some areas may have encouraged the artist to incorporate women in their visual representations.

In the paintings at Dambawa TV, Dambulla RMV and Niyandawane RMV, the wedding scenes of a royal family illustrate that the bride was purified before marriage, a custom not followed by other artists (Figure 102). Though the description of Knox on Kandyan marriages (Knox 1681: 94) mentions that the couple have water poured on them, it is entirely different from the depiction shown in the murals; these depict only the purification of the bride. The Buddhist notion of high religious status attributed to Prince Siddhartha may have aroused the artist to elevate the spirituality of his bride, Yashodhara, by purifying her before the marriage. Peiris quotes the description of *Kawsiḷumina*[145] on washing of Bride's head with pure water before the marriage (Peiris 1962: 5). This evidence suggests that there was a tradition of purifying women before they were given in marriage to royal families as described in classical literature and murals.

[145] *Kawsiḷumina* written by King Parakramabahu II in the ourteenth century verses 371-373 in chapter VIII tells us about purifying the bride (Ariyapala 2012).

The following ceremonial acts, as depicted in the paintings of rituals the artists of the period under study, are considered as events during the wedding:

- placing the couple on a special platform;
- pouring holy/sacred water on the hands of the couple;
- handing over the bride to the bridegroom as his responsibility.

This study analysed 24 works by different artists, in order to understand whether there was a pattern in how the couple were placed on a special platform based on gender and whether this might reflect social custom. This special platform prepared for the couple was known as the '*magulmaduwa*' (Davy 1821: 285). The account of *Nīti Nighaṇḍuva*[146], refers to the popular ceremony of making the couple stand on the wedding plank or dais. This was the "*Pōruwa* Ceremony" as practiced in the Kandyan districts (Peiris 1962: 3).The analysis remarkably shows that there was a definite order in placing the couple based on their gender. Twenty scenes out of 29 depict women in the prominent position, that is the right-hand side of the bridegroom (Table 11). Gilchrist points out such instances in European contexts; for example the placing of Mary's image the north side nunnery architecture (Gilchrist 1994: 128-149) In this respect, did the artists consider the right side to be a symbol of gender-informed strength[147], assigned to the women.

One of the two questions that can now be raised about placing the bride in such a way, as portrayed by the majority of the artists, relates to why they preferred to situate women in the prominent side at the wedding. This practice is considered to be the opposite of what usually takes place in present Sri Lankan society. As a result, we need to understand whether the artists deliberately chose this order to give more prominence to the men, as he would be the first character to meet the devotees following the narration order of the paintings in the temple.

Pouring sacred/holy water on the hands of the couple is meant to depict the giving of something in a respectful manner, and marks a very ancient tradition of donation in Sri

[146]*Nīti Nighaṇḍuwa* is a book written in pre-modern timse and it is consisted with constituted lows of Kandyan Kingdom (Le Mesurier and Panabokke T. B. 1880)

[147] In an article about Egyptian arts, Everly also considers right side as the dominant side (Everly 2008: 02)

Lanka.[148] Significantly, this ritual continues to be practiced even today. Davy states that the custom of pouring water was practiced for the future happiness of the pair and for the enjoyment of a long life. He further describes a royal wedding ceremony that, "the father or the nearest male relation of the bride's present, stepped forward, and pouring water on betal-leaves from a gold pot, declared, he relinquished his daughter to the king, who from that might consider her his own. The mother was asked if she assented" (Davy 1821: 166). Davy's account helps us to strengthen our understanding of three aspects depicted in murals as practiced at weddings: the father and mother's role at the wedding, pouring water and the responsibility of the groom. Peiris also highlights the prominent role of the bride's father both in handing over the daughter and pouring water as very ancient traditions of the Indian subcontinent (Peiris 1962: 1-2). These customs are also portrayed in marriage scenes. Twenty-two scenes illustrate the act conducted by the father of the bride, symbolized by his hand gesture when pouring from a special water pot (Figure 103). As well as signifying the handing over of responsibility to the husband for taking care of the bride, the depiction of this ritual reveals the gender hierarchy of a marriage feast and family. Such gendered hierarchies in murals in Sri Lanka not only points to the importance of the marriage ritual in reinforcing patriarchy, but also the use of such iconography for the same purpose. This is also underlined by Davy's statement (Davy 1821: 166).

It is important to examine the iconography of the hands of the couple. Table 12 shows that the depiction of right hands is predominant, perhaps because it was considered auspicious. It is interesting to note that Queyroz[149] noted the depiction of hands using for watering and he mentions that, "... the nearest kinswoman of the man takes the two right hands of the Bride and Bridegroom and placing one on the other, she binds with a thread the two small fingers, together, and pours over the two bound fingers some water out of a pitcher and unties them and they are married" (De Queyroz 1930: 90-91). It is compatible with the majority of the mural depictions.

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[148] "*Savana kotarikatuniyate*" the donation is confirmed by pouring from a golden water pot, PāluMākiccāva inscription, first century (Wikramasinghe1919)

[149] Father Fernão de Queiroz was a Portuguese theologist lived in the seventeenth Century. He is recognized as the greatest Portuguese historian of Ceylon (Schurhammer 1929: 215). He dedicated the twelfth chapter of his book *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon* to describe the ceremonies of Sri Lankan marriages (De Queyroz 1930: 87-91).

Similarly, the artist's placement of the hands also confirms the gender hierarchy of a marriage scene. The bridegroom's hand is placed above the bride's in 12 scenes. The bride's hand had been placed at a higher level in five scenes and another five shows the hand of both the bride and the bridegroom at the same level. Thus, artists tended to use the iconography of the bride and bridegroom's hands to illustrate the prominence of the bridegroom. Knox observes that the couple, "...sometimes they tye their Thumbs together..." (Knox 1681:94), which is still practiced in the marriage ceremony. According to *Kāvyasēkharaya* the father gives his daughter's hand by placing her hand on the hand of the bridegroom (Dharmarama 1966 ch. VI, v.32). This also tells us about the symbolic handing over for responsibility of the bride to the groom.

Some murals demonstrate the active involvement of the bride's mother in the ceremony (Figure 104a-b). Although fathers were empowered by society in this ritual, there are two, rare examples of the effective involvement of mothers in handing over their daughter to the bridegroom. The scale and positioning of the mother indicates her power and active empowerment in decision-making. It is noteworthy that the scale of the father in these two examples is small, and he is situated in the background. These depictions may be taken to be portrayals of matriarchal societies or of families in the area to the murals such as Kelaniya RMV and Purvarama PV. As Queyroz shows, the responsibility of performing most ceremonial acts was conducted by a woman (De Queyroz 1930: 90-91). Queyroz talks about his experiences of the seventeenth century low-country. The two places which provide these instances of the prominent behaviour of women also come from the low-country. It can be argued that the artists of the temples tried to recreate the memory of female involvement in marriage ceremonies which had been practice in the recent past of those areas.

The artists' illustrations indicated gender differentiation in the participants at the wedding feast through their murals. Table13 shows that the obligatory participation of the bride's father in the event is depicted in most murals. The father of the bridegroom is depicted frequently but the mothers of both the bride and bride groom are depicted less frequently. Only two scenes show the mother of the bridegroom (Figure 105). These representations directly reflect the lack of importance of women in such ceremonial acts as the wedding and patriarchal figures are emphasized. In a few paintings, such as at Ranvella PV and Samudragiri PV, the women were placed in

separate rooms outside the wedding platform. This supports the argument that there was a gender hierarchy in the marriages of colonial Sri Lanka.

The majority of the paintings portrayed the bridegroom as the most important person at the event, by depicting him at a larger scale than the other figures. It is interesting to note that the scenes in the paintings in Purvarama PV illustrate the different levels at which the bride was placed. They show both bride and bridegroom at an equal height, and the bride being placed higher than the bridegroom and the bride's mother. Examination of the levels at which the various human figures were placed in depictions of the marriage ceremony shows that more attention was given to the bridegroom or the father of the bride in most works, whilst only two illustrate the mother of the bride as larger than that of fathers.

The next feature to discuss is the garments of the bride. Table 14 shows that it was common to show that the breasts of women were exposed, even at a wedding. Sometimes, however, they were covered with a shawl from head to neck, draped over the upper body. The elderly women are covered only from the shoulders in southern Sri Lankan painting tradition. Brides are very often depicted in gowns.

"The Man carrieth or sends to the Woman her Wedding Cloths; which is a Cloth containing six or seven yards in length, and a Linnen Wast-coat wrought with Blew and Red" (Knox 1681: 94). As Knox says, the clothes of the bride were provided by the bride groom. Colonial influences may have led to the adaptation of these garments for wedding scenes in murals. This is not to say that these gowns were not worn by local women, and the fashion was initially associated with the Europeans and later imitated by local elites. The murals shown in the depiction of the wedding feast featured in the story of Mahadana Situ, reveal women dressed in European gowns, which indicates the Colonial impact on Sri Lankan culture, particularly in the southern coastal areas. The emergence of European dresses, in such temple murals as Vagolla PV, demonstrates to us that the imitation of this fashion extended to the up-county in the late Colonial period. Not only the garments, but headdresses, veils, fans and shawls were new symbols introduced to Sri Lankan culture. These accessorises were used by European women

and eventually they were imitated by the noble women in the low-country.[150] The cultural intercourse which existed between Europeans and Sri Lankan nobles is particularly depicted in the dress code of marriage ceremonies in low-country murals. From the scene in Gangarama MV, in the low-county, the depiction of the bride wearing a cross as a pendant is powerful evidence to suggest the cultural impact of the colonialism and colonialised bodies of women. The marriage law of the low-country, established by the Dutch and continued by the British, to register and perform the function at churches (Mettananda 2000: 41-71), may also have reformed the traditional clothing and accessories of the wedding dress code. Over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was a dramatic increase in the use of European cultural icons in Sri Lankan functions. This colonial conditioning can be seen in the work of artists at some temples, which reflects the cultural identities which may have been embraced by the Sri Lankans.

The wedding feast depicted in Purvarama PV provides information on social gatherings and entertainments seen at weddings (Figure 86b). It is interesting to note the men and women in European garments and playing musical instruments, which increases the westernization of the function. In Purvarama PV, dancing girls, and musicians are depicted as part of the marriage ceremony though this was not highlighted in other temples. Though this was not a regular custom of ceremonies, Davy notes such entertainments at a royal wedding (Davy 1821: 167), and with the scenes shown at Kataluwa PV, it suggests to viewers that there was a tradition of dancing and music events at weddings in selected areas. De Queiroz, too, mentions that dancing and music were a function of marriages ceremonies (de Queiroz 1930: 87-91). Even so, all the musical instruments and costumes of the dancing women indicate a European impact.

Going away or bringing the bride home was introduced into scenes of the post-ceremonial act of a wedding. Transport facilities allocated for the couple are determined by their social status and economic stability. It is noted that some couples walk towards the house of the husband (Telwatta RMV and Uttamarama PV) whilst some elites and members of the royal family used a coach pulled by horses, ride on elephants

[150] Wickramasinghe explains how the low county women adopted so many European styles (Wickramasinghe 2003: 15-17)

(Uttamarama PV, Ranvella PV) or travel by sailboat (Ranwella PV). The gender aspects of these travelling methods will be discussed in detail in the next section. Knox's observations on conducting the bride highlights the elements depicted in the murals,"The next day having dined he taketh his Bride and departeth home with her, putting her before him, and he following her, with some of her Friends to conduct her. For it is the constant Custom and Fashion in this Land for the Husband to follow his wife. The reason whereof is a Tradition among them, that a Man once going foremost, it happened that his wife was stolen away, and he not aware of it" (Knox 1681:94). So, according to Knox, the bride is placed before the bridegroom in order to ensure her protection. This idea draws our attention to the conducting of Amitatapa, by the old bridegroom Jujaka, depicted in *Vessantara Jātaka* in Telwatta RMV. Jujaka put his wife before him and raises an umbrella to shade her. This indicates to us the social notion that the security of the wife is a husband's responsibility. In contrast, as Davy stated, the wedded king in a royal wedding was succeeded or followed by the bride and she sits on a lower seat (Davy 1821: 165). This order is shown in the royal wedding scenes of Dambawa TV.

The story of Patachara in *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* (Ganavimal 1971: 634-640) depicted in Purvarama PV projects a different kind of marriage for an elite woman who elopes with a servant of her house. Initially, in a secret meeting in the upstairs of her noble house before her marriage, she is depicted as a European princess. Then she is portrayed in a long sleeved jacket and a cloth after she ran away with the servant. In the latter stage of the mural, her external appearance resembles that of a female servant as shown in low-country murals. This indicates to the viewers that a woman should change her dress code in order to correspond with her marital status. Even though the woman came from a high social background, she had to follow social constraints by changing her dress code according to the social status of the husband. Davy's statement, on the marriages of the lowest ranks, tells us that they did not have marriage ceremonies, "amongst people of the lowest rank, little attention is paid to the marriage ceremony, and no families is observed excepting that of asking leave of parents to part with their daughter" (Davy 1821: 286). In the depiction of the story of Patachara in Purvarama PV, the servant parts with her without having a ceremony, and he does not seek the permission of the parents before eloping. The evidence discussed, however, shows us

that the marriage ceremony was determined by the social status of the couple, and particularly that of the bridegroom.

Knox mentions an important observation, although it was not a subject of murals. "…the Bride and Bridegroom both eat together in one Dish, which is to intimate that they are both of one rank and quality" (Knox1681: 94).[151] Nevertheless, he states the action as a symbol of rank and quality, and this custom indicated gender equality. The depiction of marriages in murals was somewhat far behind this social notion, however. Davy describes the qualifications of a bride, measured by the father of the bridegroom. "Bride's qualifications-age, and disposition: he is contented if she is younger than his son, in good health, free from ulcers and are corporeal blemishes, possessed of a pretty and disposition, and acquainted with the ordinary duties of a housewife" (Davy 1821: 285). The bride as an ideal housewife is one of the expectations of the husband's family and determining all these qualifications, by the father of the bride groom, indicates the gender hierarchy of the society.

Finally, an analysis of temple murals provides ample evidence of the presence of gender hierarchy and the power of gender in marriages in pre-modern Sri Lankan cultures. Prominence was given to the role of the male, specifically fathers, in marriage ceremonies: the decisions were made by fathers, ceremonial acts were performed by fathers, the emphasis on the compulsory participation of fathers marginalized women in wedding feasts, and fathers handed over the responsibilities of taking care of the wife to the husband, with female figures indicated in secondary positions. At the same time, the European impact and the evidence of situating women on a prominent side is also noteworthy. Every aspect of these observations supports the assumption that there was a system of gender-biased marriages in the historical context of pre-modern Sri Lanka.

6.2 Travelling Methods

The different methods used by women to travel will be examined and compared in this section. It raises questions about the kind of travelling systems used by women, how they were used. It compared the gendered experience of travel and understands the privileges and restrictions of usage in comparison to men and the social status of the

[151] Both Cordiner and Philalethes quote Knox's account (Cordiner 1807:130; Philalethes 1817: 187)

users. Finally, this section examines whether artists were gender-biased in their visual representations.

The murals, as the main sources of evidence, provide ample instances to demonstrate the different ways women travel. The means of transportation used by women were varied according to their social status and geographical significance. The following means of travel by women can be recognized in images of pre-modern Sri Lankan murals.

- Walking
- Carrying by men or women
- Palanquin
- Riding on an animal
- Carriages
- Sailboats or ships

Murals indicate that walking was the most common way for women to travel both long and short distances. Women representing the middle and lower classes are always shown walking as it was the only option they had, since they did not own carriages and nor were they allowed to use such facilities. In contrast, the murals of Bambaragala RMV represent Queen Maya's journey to her parents on foot, even though she is a representative of the royal family. In contrast to this, however, depictions of the same event in other temples show her travelling by palanquin or carriage.

Artists determined a specific walking order for a group of women. According to the *Uraga Jātaka* painting in Medawala TV, the journey to the field is led by the eldest woman and she is followed by a young noble woman (Figure 65b). The female slave is placed behind the elite. This visual narration represents to the viewers that slaves did not have the privilege to over take their masters. This is reflected in other murals where transposition in journeys is prioritized according to age and social status. The description of Selkirk[152] on the religious visit of a family to the temple (Selkirk 1844: 111) also tells of the same social notion about the responsibilities of family slaves in providing comfort towards their masters and the position in walking order.

[152] see the page no: 100 of chapter 4

In Ranvella PV, a scene shows a man carrying a woman on his shoulders in the story of *Ummagga Jātaka*. Similarly, in Subadrarama PV and Kotte RMV, a woman carryies a man in a basket on her head in the *Andhabhūta Jātaka* story, and a woman carryies a disabled man[153] in the same manner in the *Cullapaduma Jātaka* panels at Kotte RMV. There was also a tradition of adults carrying children in this manner. When a couple travelled with two children, the lightest or the youngest was given to the woman to carry in order to take into account her weaker physical status. For many years artists and writers have considered the physical weakness of a woman as a key feature in comparison to the men. This is one of the reasons for the smaller scale of female figures in relation to males in paintings. The story of Vessantara also hints at the physical weakness of woman in the event of carrying children,[154] and every artist who has painted this story has always followed this tradition. As a result, the portrayal of Mandri carrying little Krishnajina and Vessantara with Jaliya is common in every visual representation in any time or place. The description of sharing responsibilities for two children between the husband and wife, in *Vessantara Jātaka*, confirms the social consensus of physical weakness of women in relation to that of men.

One of the most popular ways of travelling for royal families was using a palanquin. It can be considered as one of the most luxurious methods used by nobles for travelling. There are numerous scenes in murals which illustrate its usage by women in both up-country and low-country (Figure 106). According to the visual evidence, this method was used entirely by the women of the royal family. Textual sources reveal that a special social group called "*ūliyakkāra*" were appointed by the king to carry the palanquins.[155] The palanquins that women travelled in were carried by two or four men. Murals in temples such as Dambawa TV, Purvarama PV, Niyandawane RMV, Ranvella PV, Sailabimbarama PV, Samudragiri PV, Sudarshanarama PV, Karapitiya, Sudarshanarama PV, Velinida, Sudarshanarama PV, Godapitiya, Suriyagoda RMV and Walalgoda RMV confirm this practice. It is clear that the palanquins were always

[153] A man with no arms and legs

[154] "You carry Kanhajina, Maddi, for she is the younger and is light, and I will carry Jali, her brother, as he is heavier" (Gombrich and Cone 1977: 33)

[155] Peiris states that "ūliyakkāraya servis, generally performed by paduwas and other low caste people, who were liable to carry the chief's palanquin if he was entitled to such conveyance, or to perform other menial service, according to custom" (Peris 1956: 68)

covered by curtains. However, in murals, the women who travelled in them tended to be shown peeping through the curtains. In essence, these portrayals give an impression of the yearnings of these royal women, who had very confined lives within the palace.

Though royal women used palanquins for travelling, women from the upper classes were not permitted to use this method of travelling,

> "In the reign of the last king, Maralande Kumarihami, the wife of the Adigar Pilima Talawwe, when going to the seven korales, asked the priest of Medawala Vihare for a palanquin to travel in: the priest refused: he could not give a palanquin belonging to the vihare to carry a woman…." (Lawrie 1898: 582).

Lawrie refers to the wife of the highest official of the court; a woman who represents very high social status. However, the refusal of the request shows that this was not a privilege of even such noble families. There is a very rare incident, however, where permission was given to a woman outside the royal family to travel in a palanquin. During the reign of King Senarat in Kandyan Kingdom, a victorious woman fighter named Punchi Manika alias "*Edanduwawē ganu disāve",* who was appointed as the first female *Disāve* or the chief official of a province, was given permission to use a palanquin for her official travels (Bell 1904: 50).

There is archaeological evidence for the use of palanquins in the medieval and colonial periods of Sri Lanka and female figures were most commonly used to decorate them. As an illustration, the palanquin of Gadaladeniya RMV was adorned with a traditional "*Nāri-latā"*decoration. Furthermore, some composite figures such as "*Chatur-nāri-pallækki*"[156]and "*Sapta-nāri-pallækki*"[157] also show the efficacy of female figures in decorative motifs of palanquins. Though the palanquins were carried by the men in practice, these decorations show that the mythical palanquins were carried by women.

Women travelling on animals are also depicted in murals of the period. Horse and elephant riding are prominent examples of this and, interestingly, they are illustrated in both up-country and low-country murals (Figure 107). There was a social ideology and custom relating to the riding position on an elephant based on gender. Only males were permitted to place their legs on both sides of the elephant, whereas women had to keep

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[156]*Caturnāripallakki*, or four women palanquin (Coomaraswamy 1908:91)

[157]*Saptanāripallakki*, or seven women palanquin (Coomaraswamy 1908: 91)

their legs to one side. All the artists of up-country and low-country comply with this custom. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that women who travelled on elephants were always depicted with a male figure. Places such as Arattana RMV, Dambawa TV, Potgul maliga MV, Purvarama PV, Ranwella PV, Sailabimbarama PV, Mirissa PV, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, Tunmahal V, Velikotuwa PV and Uttamarama PV provide good examples of this. It is interesting to note the historical evidence about "*Edanduwawē Gēnu disāve*" and the privileges and official status given to her by the king. Being the first provincial chief, she was given special permission to follow the male elephant riding position (Bell 1904: 50), and this permission also states the custom of restricting women's riding position. By the same token the temple paintings of Subadrarama PV show that both men and women kept their legs to one side when elephant riding.

Murals show two types of carriages used by women as a mode of land transportation. They are: carriages pulled by a person using stick, and carriages pulled by animals. Southern Sri Lankan paintings, in particular, depict a two wheel open carriage drawn by a man using a long stick. Sailabimbarama PV, Tunmahal V and Sasseruwa RMV (Figure 108a) provide ample evidence for the usage of this vehicle. This is not seen in up-country paintings, however, as it may not have been a suitable method of transportation as the area is mountainous. It is notable that it was always pulled by a man. When a man and a woman travelled in this chariot, the woman was always placed in the back of the vehicle, whilst a woman travelling alone was placed in the middle of the chariot.

The most common conveyance used by women in murals is carriages pulled by two horses. In this manner, the royal family commonly travelled. In some places, such as Uttamarama PV, some women officials of the court are also shown using this method. As with other types of chariot, the back was always allocated to women when they travelled with men. Arattana RMV, Asgiri RMV, Potgul Maliga MV, Hindagala RMV, Kaballelena RMV, Dagama, Pilikuttuwa RMV, Ranvella PV, Subadrarama PV, Talawa RMV, Telwatta RMV and Uttamarama PV provide examples of women who travel in horse-drawn vehicles (Figures 108b and 109).

Sailboats for travelling by water are shown in low-country temple murals, such as Ranvella PV and Sailbimbarama PV. Naval activities in the region may have encouraged the artists' use of such narrations. In Ranvella PV, a princess who is married to a king, travels in a ship after the marriage. The southern coastal area, particularly the village Dodanduwa, was very famous for maritime activities which identify it as a port. There was also a tradition in coastal villages of making sail boats, "*Dodandūwa Yātrā Dōni*", for maritime trade. This socio-economic tendency has been elaborately incorporated into the murals of the period. The relationship between women and sailboats in astrology is a significant subject of low-county murals (Figure 110). In particular, the representation of the astrological sign 'Virgo' by the artists can be equated with the astrological description in textual sources, where the virgin is described as being in a boat.[158]

There were different kinds of services offered for noble women when they needed to travel. Escorting and raising umbrellas by servants and attendants of the palace are clearly visualized in murals. Correspondingly, when a king and a queen travel in one vehicle, two different umbrellas were raised for them separately. Interestingly, although women who came from middle or lower classes were not permitted to travel in vehicles, in Ranvella PV, the two female attendants, who raise an umbrella and a flywhisk, are depicted in the vehicle in which the queen travels.

To sum up, it is notable that the women representing the royal family had different types of methods for travel, whilst walking was the most common way for the majority of womenfolk in the country who came from other social backgrounds. In the transporting vehicle, front and back areas were allocated based on gender, emphasizing the secondary position of the women. At the same time, there were traditions and restrictions concerning women that had to be followed in different travelling methods, and pre-modern murals show that there was gender discrimination in travelling systems.

[158] *Brihat Jātaka* or *Varahamihira* describes the nature of "Sign of vergo is of the shape of the virgin in a boat with crops (in one hand) and a light (in the other)" (Iyer 1885: 04)

6.3 Obeisance

The use of body and head movements to communicate conventional ideas of society is understood as an obeisance, and the iconography as depicted in mural paintings is examined in this section in order to understand social notions towards obeisance. First, the nature of movements and the purposes of expressing these movements are explained. Then, this section tries look at gender relations and the gender identity which motivated the artist. Finally, it examines whether the artist and society observed any kind of a gender difference in depicting obeisance in murals of pre-modern Sri Lanka.

For centuries, obeisance has been practiced as one of the traditional signs of reverence among Sri Lankan Buddhists. This is a posture and a gesture which commonly entails moving the head and knee. The main gesture is communicated symbolically using hands. Data analysis reveals that obeisance varied from one person to another, depending on their objectives, personality, social status and gender. Therefore, hand gestures, postures and their motions are examined here in order to understand the meaning intended by the artists in respective contexts. The contexts of the story in which these characters are present help to answer questions about what the obeisance expresses to the intended audience. According to the primary data analysis, this body motion was used for such meanings as accommodating welcome, arrival, departure, submission, getting permission, compliance, offering religious respect, listening, obedience, donation, agreement, requesting, humility and homage.

Expressing the welcome is one of the common acts which the artists linked with obeisance in their visual representation (Figure 111a-b). For instance, when somebody arrives at a place, he or she is warmly welcomed by a character who has folded hands in a gesture of greeting. Knox states that

> "When they meet one another, their manner of Salutation or obeisance is, to hold forth their two hands, the Palms upwards, and bow their Bodies: but the superior to the inferior holds forth but one hand, and if the other be much beneath, him he only nods his head. The women salute by holding up both their hands edgways to their Foreheads. The general complement one to another at first meeting is to say Ay; it signifies how do you: and the other answers, Hundoi, that is, well." (Knox 1681:89)

As observed Knox, this is one of the main culturally symbolic practices in Sri Lanka for centuries, with arrival or departure accompanied by saying the word "ayubowan or aubowewa*". "Āubūwan"* or "may you live long" is a traditional greeting uttered with the palms held together and raised in salutation" (Gunawardane 2006: 34). In most of these events, as depicted in murals, it is evident that the welcome gesture is very often performed by women. For instance, in Degaldoruwa RMV and Asgiri Gedige RMV, Prince Vessantara and his family reach the city of Chetiya and are welcomed by the Queen of Chetiya. There are many such events depicted in both up-country and low-country painting. In the aforesaid story Mandri, who returned to her native place, also expresses this salutation by her hands. In Degaldoruwa RMV, when the Vessantara family departed from the royal palace, Queen Phusati and other female attendants of the palace also express the same gesture. The hand gesture which indicates arrival and departure is always made by women. With a couple, for example, only the woman bows her body and enacts the welcome gesture. Even today women are employed as receptionists or to welcome people, as they are considered appropriate to carry out this role. This then tells us that there was a social acceptance for employing women in such a role. The stereotyped gender identities of women having a warm-hearted and sensitive nature have been idealized in pre-modern society, and it may have manipulated the artist's portrayal too.

The obtaining of permission is also symbolised by means of this gesture (Figure 118b). Here, if one needed to say or do something, or if one was leaving a place, permission needed to be gained from a more powerful person than the one seeking the permission, and this is indicated by this gesture in murals. The difference between the former and departure is that only the person who receives the permission performs the salutation instead of the salutation of both in departure. For instance, in both up-country and low-country murals, the occasions on which Mandri and Vessantara take permission before they leave the palace, and the Brahmin Jujaka, who is getting permission for leaving to bring slaves for his wife in *Vessantara Jātaka*, very often visualizes this gesture. Generally Prince Vessatara and Mandri only perform this gesture as they have less power according to the story. Interestingly, Jujaka, as the husband of Amitatapa, has been depicted using this gesture to symbolize the power relationship within their family,

and how the posture is changed according to their power relationship is discussed below in the section which examines this gesture and the meaning of submission.

Among the gestures of religious respect, the most common veneration is performed to the Buddha, gods and Buddhist monks (Figures 16; 37-38). It is notable that the majority of worshippers, with the above purpose in murals, are women and all of them have folded hands in a gesture of adoration. All the devotees are commonly depicted in the seated pose. At the same time, the placing of the folded hand on the head or forehead is depicted as a way of increasing the adoration. Chapter 4 discussed the position of women in religious practice demarcated by this posture and gesture. As noted in the fifth chapter, most depictions of the adoration posture are performed by women as opposed to men. This is a deep bow with the foot drawn backwards and raised folded hands. Society, through the artists shared the idea that the devotion of women was higher than that of men, whilst at the same time placing women at a lower level of precedence to men, and therefore providing an opportunity to strengthen the gender hierarchy prevalent at the time. In religious donations, this body movement is used to indicate the conformity of religious devotion in the scenes of Sujata, who offers alms for the Buddha, and incorporates and projects into this gesture the action of recommending and accepting the donation made by somebody else. There is ample visual evidence in the narration of *Vessantara Jātaka*, for example when Prince Vessantara gives away his wealth, Mandri is shown in this gesture to illustrate her approval for the meritorious work done by her husband.

It is interesting to note that the artists of the up-county temples, namely Madanvala RMV, Nagavimana PV, Kithulpe RMV and Bodhimalkada PV, highlight a tradition of depicting a row of seated women who flank the god. All these women in this posture have folded hands. What does this conveys to the intended audience? It can be argued that this is one of the efforts made by the artist to increase the divine quality and religious respect of the god. The use of women in showing the religious status of the men is visible in selected places in the murals of *Vessantara Jātaka*. In up-country painting tradition in particular, it is prominent that Princess Mandri worships Vessantara, who has become a hermit. In Degaldoruwa RMV, Mandri kneels down touching the ground with her forehead in front of Vessantara. Similarly, the murals of Medawala TV place Mandri in a similar posture of respect to her husband. This tendency of the artist

suggests to us that religious prestige was corroborated by receiving veneration from the women.

The kneeling and folded hands gesture to mean listening can be recognized in the *Sattubhatta Jātaka* painting in Degaldoruwa RMV (Figure 100). Both male and female students are in this gesture at the side of the teacher, confirming that they are listening to the teaching. In the same manner, the lay men and women who listen to the preaching of the Buddha, are also presented with the same gesture in a panel at Potgul Maliga MV (Figure 16a). This gesture symbolises the submission, obedient or compliant, of the people depicted in the mural paintings of the period. This is commonly used to show obedience in front of powerful kings and masters. It was used as one of the ways of showing power relationships in society, usually surrendering power to another. Remarkably, there are a number of examples that Brahmin Jujaka, in *Vessantara Jātaka*, was depicted with this gesture in front of his wife in a humble manner, as a person who takes orders from his wife. On the one hand, it reflects the power of gender within the family; on the other, it should be questioned why artists highlighted such a portrayal in their visual representations. The significant factor of the character of Amitatapa and her diverse personality, is that the artist presents her differently in changing social contexts. According to the original story, she was such an obedient girl (Cowell 1907: 270-271) to her father that she accepted an arranged marriage with a very old peculiar man. Very ambiguous material evidence reflects that she becomes aggressive (Gamlath 1990: vv. 390 - 394) and controls her husband after the interference of village women in her family matters (Gamlath 1990: vv.379- 389). Amitatapa transforms her stereotyped woman's role into a dominant personality by refusing to do household activities, asking for slaves, refusing to have sex with her husband and threatening him (Cowell 1907: 271-272). Moreover, she was brave enough to beat and slap her husband. Eventually, Brahmin Jujaka alters to portray a submissive personality getting permission from his wife when he goes out of the house and kneeling at her feet. The importance of this is that some artists purposely selected, not only these scenes, but also labelled the events as if to emphasize that he obtained Amitatapa's permission. Touching the ground with the forehead is considered a sign of respect or submission, indicating excessive humility. The behaviour of Amitatapa challenges the typical gender hierarchy of respective societies. At the same time, according to the original story, Jujaka is portrayed as a

Brahmin but the repugnance of Buddhist artists towards the Nayakkar rulers (of South Indian origin) was exposed indirectly though this representation. It is clear that the depictions of the same incident in Degaldoruwa RMV and Medawala TV, which were constructed under the patronage of the Nayakkar King Kirti Sri, do not visualize this portrayal. The murals of Medawala TV completely drop the event from its narration, and the artist of Degaldoruwa RMV does show Amitatapa beating her husband; this portrayal, however, does not change the personality of Jujaka. It can be argued that kneeling down, in a deep bow in front of the wife, or showing obedience to the wife, was considered as a loss of male dignity by contemporaries. Society, therefore, conveyed its repulsion towards the non–Buddhist rulers by insulting Jujaka in their visual representations. Although the *Vessantara Jātaka Kāvya* is a poetic version of *Vessantara Jātaka*, it constantly expresses the insulting physical and behavioural characteristics of Jujaka (Gamlath 1990: vv. 371-389). It is believed that *Vessantara Jātaka Kāvya* was the composition of a folk poet in the eighteenth to nineteenth century. The changes to the original story of *Vessantara Jātaka Kāvya,* also strengthens the ideas of the animosity of Buddhists towards the non-Buddhists who ruled the country at that time. However, the social ideology indicated through the murals is that women should not behave in this manner and men should maintain their male personality and dignity within the family.

The hand gesture is also used to mean supplication, which is somewhat stronger than that of normal requesting. In the visual representation of *Culla Dharmapāla Jātaka*, Queen Chandrawati prays to the executioner and the king for the life of her only child (Figure 111c). In Velikotuwa PV, Telwatta PV, Potgul Maliga MV, she kneels down with a deep bow and prays for his life with this gesture. In Telvatta RMV, Arattana RMV, Nagavimana PV, Bodhimalkada PV, the Brahmin Jujaka, when beaten by his wife, also kneels down in the same manner as if praying for his life. These depictions suggest that this posture and gesture can be used as a supplication and not purely as a gendered symbol.

In conclusion, it is important to question whether the arts have followed any social consensus or bias in regards to gender and veneration. In religious venerations, both men and women are depicted in the same manner. In other situations, however, the most notable factor is that the males were most commonly the receivers and women were the

performers of the veneration. In this manner the artist observed gender discrimination and this reflected the gender relations of society. In the veneration of adults, especially in worshipping of parents, there is gender discrimination observed by the artists. In the scenes which depict parents who receive veneration from their children or other young people, the father is placed in a prominent position which is understood as the foreground and before the mother, who is placed behind the father. It directly indicates that the central figure who receives the veneration is the man. This is perfectly presented in *Vessantara Jātaka* in the scenes of Vessantara's departure to the forest. The father, King Sandamaha, is venerated while the mother, Queen Phusati, stands in the background in the murals of some temples such as Kumara PV, Sunandarama PV and Degaldoruwa RMV (Figure 118d). In contrast, as the person who performs the veneration, the woman is placed before the male. As a result of this placing, the female is depicted with a deep bow in a seated position while the man just bends his upper body slightly forward. It is noted that women are place at a lower level than that of men when they are in a position of worship as a couple. This suggests that social consensus was for women to be in a secondary position to the male. In the majority of the scenes which depict seated couples, the artists tend to give a lower seat to the woman. In such scenes, it can be argued that the artists of the period observed the social consensus that women's positions were lower than that of men. Remarkably, in sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda, at the scene of the worshipping the parents by the son, two different positions are observed by him when he salutes his mother and father. It is notable that the son, who is getting ready to leave the palace, only bows his upper body at the veneration of his father. In contrast, in his homage to his mother, he touches the ground with his forehead and worships showing adoration. This may be a portrayal by the artist of the very close affection between sons and their mothers. It can also be recognised as a traditional gender stereo-type of women. Finally, in general, it is evident that all these gestures are used to communicate prearranged meanings by a society which demarcates gender relationships in respective social contexts.

6.4 Sorrow, Weeping and Women

People express their feelings of deep grief in different ways. This section examines the ways that women expressed their grief and how this feeling was depicted by the artists

of pre-modern Sri Lanka. The causes of their distress are examined and how these were represented. Furthermore, this section evaluates the artists' perspective towards gender in weeping scenes and similarly attempts to understand the social ideology of gender identity that exhorted the artists to shape their visual liturgies. In the first place, it is essential to understand the causes of weeping intimated in visual narrations of the period.

Departure: In temple murals, scenes of the *Vessantara Jātaka*, which include the sorrow of women, are depicted in different ways. At the departure of Prince Vessantara and family, the weeping of Queen Phusathi is presented in Sunandarama PV and Kumara PV and the weeping of female attendants of the palace is depicted in Degaldoruwa RMV (Figure 113).

Death or Loss: The weeping of women over death or loss is frequently depicted in *Culla Dharmapāla Jātaka* paintings narrated in different temples. The remorse of the Queen at the death of her own child, and the sorrow of royal attendants at the death of the Queen in the same story, was emphasized by artists in almost every temple where this subject was selected. For instance, in Niyandavane RMV, Velikotuwa PV, Dowa RMV, Ganekanda PV, Potgul Maliga MV, Telwatta RMV and Velegodapla TV, Queen Chandravati in *Culla Dharmapāla Jātaka* is depicted in the postures which show her distress at losing the child. Likewise, these postures are used in Ranvella PV, for the people of the palace who weep at the death of a king, for the lamentation of the parents at the death of their only son in *Sāma Jātaka* at Samudragiri RMV, and the distress of the mother toward the untimely death of her son in *Uraga Jātaka* in Madawala TV (Figures 3a and 116b).

Praying for life: Queen Chandrawati, the wailing mother at the feet of the executioner and the king in order to save the life her son mentioned in *Culla Dharmapāla Jātaka*, and the small children of *Vessantara Jātaka* are presented in Dowa RMV, Velikotuwa PV, Kumara MV temples can be highlighted as the instance for weeping for someone's life (Figure 111).

The nature of the distress of women can be identified by different physical features, gestures and postures as prescribed by artists in murals. The Buddhist literary sources such as *Majjhima Nikāya, Mūla Pannāsakaya, Sihanāda Vaggaya* and *Mahā*

Dukkakkhanda sutra (Trenckner 1888), explain the nature of sorrow and the ways it was expressed, for example, shedding tears, crying, fainting and touching hands on the hearts are highlighted. Artists drawing inspiration from these religious books tended to follow a similar notion in their visual narrations. Unfastened hair is a prominent way of expressing the grief of the bereft. Such depictions were more popular in low-country painting. The *Thūpavaṃsa* (thirteenth century) mentions the behaviour of women with unfastened hair at the death of King Duttagamini (Hettiarachchi 1947). In *Vessantara Jātaka*, although the children of Mandri did not die, in temples such as Telwatta RMV, Vijesundararama RMV and Potgul Maliga MV, the murals' depiction of her behaviour is similar to that of a woman who has lost children. Generally, touching different parts of one's body is used to depict grief (Figures 112-115). In the murals, body parts such as the cheek, forehead, head and the chest are touched by weeping women. These images remind the viewers about the nature of the sorrow as described in Buddhist literature. At the same time, the posture of the weepers also varies according to the nature of their grief. Markedly, postures such as crouching, grovelling, standing and sitting were used to depict grief (table 15-16 and figure 112-114).

Women have been considered more emotionally expressive, more empathetic and more sensitive to others' feelings,

> "Their manner of mourning for the dead is, that all the Women that are present do loose their hair, and let it hang down, and with their two hands together behind their heads do make an hideous noise, crying and roaring as loud as they can, much praysing and extolling the Virtues of the deceased, tho there were none in him: and lamenting their own woful condition to live without him. Thus for three or four mornings they do rise early, and lament in this manner, also on evenings. Mean while the men stand still and sigh" (Knox 1681: 112).

The literary sources of the period also provide some information which reflects upon the social notions of gender identity with regard to weeping in society. In *Uraga Jātaka* (Cowell 1897) it clearly states the notion that, "women are very sensitive toward crying" (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 697-699). In other words, crying is recognized as a feminine characteristic and society has given it a gender identity. The paintings which came from this social background also tended to emphasize the same ideology. In murals, among the human figures the majority of weeping figures are female. Even though both men and women faced the same sorrowful incident, only women expressed their sorrow, whilst men are perceived to have a more stoic personality. For instance, at the departure

of Vessantara, his mother places her hands on her head in murals at Kumara MV in Dodanduwa, and on her cheek at Sunandarama PV. In contrast, the father who stands near Vessantara in the same event does not express his feeling. This indicates that showing feelings such as sorrow publicly were not considered masculine (Figure 118).

The murals at Medawala TV derive from the *Uraga Jātaka* painting. In the story, the god Sakra emphasizes the mindfulness of the women even in the tragic demise of their own sons. In contrast, ignoring the description of the *Jātaka* story, the artist places the hand of a farmer's wife on her head in this painting to symbolize her lamentation (Figure 2a). At the same time the farmer reflects the exact gesture and posture that show he is stoic. The main argument of this iconographic analysis is that the artist had visibly recast the central idea of the story according to his view of appropriate gender bias towards the notion of weeping. Similarly, the *Vessantara Jātaka* painting of Sunandarama PV also confirms this social consensus. According to the story, Prince Vessantara donates all of his movable and immovable properties before he leaves the palace in agreement with Mandri, his wife. However, in the murals of Sunandarama, she places her hand on her cheek to show her dislike for her husband's generosity (Figure 35). This hand gesture reveals that women may worry about losing their property. It also explains the gender bias of the artists and how they were encouraged by the social consensus to follow a refutation of the central idea of the stories. Such portrayals convince us of the notion that female characteristics are more influential than that of their religious consciousness, as well as showing the role of mother as an embodiment of compassion.

There are some rare depictions of a weeping man in Ranvella PV Hindagala RMV and Samudragiri RMV. In the *Sāma Jātaka* painting of Mirissa RMV (Figure 117-118), both father and mother bewail together the untimely death of their only child. The artist presents both parents in the same expressive hand gesture of weeping (Table 16). Similarly, the *Ummagga Jātaka* painting in Ranvella PV demonstrates that both the men and women of the royal palace use the same hand gesture (placing hands on their head) and unbind their hair, which is a powerful way of expressing sorrow. However, these two instances also clearly indicate the artist's perception towards stereotyped gender characteristics. In the mural of Ranvella PV, figures of two men and a woman have been depicted, nevertheless, while all three figures have lose hair, only the woman

places both her hands on her head, whilst the two men place only one hand on the head to express their sorrow. Similarly, in the instance of Samudragiri PV, from the *Sāma Jātaka* narration, both mother and father of Sama use both their hands to show their deep sorrow; left hands on the head and right hands on the check. However, the mother also bends the upper part of her body symbolising her pain is stronger than that of father. Both these instances show us directly how the artists of these two temples reinforced the social notion of the tenderness of women which is recognized as a stereotyped gender identity.

To summarize, the weeping scenes that are shown in Sri Lankan up-country and low-country temple murals most commonly use women as their subjects whilst a very few examples show weeping men. There has been a tradition of the loosening of hair due to sorrow caused by death, particularly in the lowcountry tradition. Different hand gestures were used to illustrate sorrow. Society assigned the weeping to women as a gender characteristic. The majority of the artists tended to replicate this social ideology in their visual representations, sometimes even by changing the central idea of the story. Above all, the gender roles assigned by artists to women are clear when considering their visual narrations on sorrow.

6.5 Sexual and Gender Identity

The temple murals of pre-modern Sri Lanka represent a form of religious art which mirror the social landscape of the time. This section examines the nature of gender identity attributed by the artists when they contextualised the subjects in their socio-religious contexts. For this purpose, the main biological differences embedded by the artist into the female body and how they embed gender identity into the figures are examined. The first section discusses different criteria used by the artist to demarcate the sex of human figures mainly the female. The shape of the body, hair, sexual organs and skin complexion are examined in order to understand the sexual identity projected by the artist. This section then deals with the perception of artist of gender attribution. The examination of body modifications and associated objects will help to realize the gender identity embedded in these human figures.

Feminine beauty is one of the most common subjects of Sri Lankan historical poetic literature. It provides us with a picture of a woman with an ideal figure. The literature of

the late medieval period and pre-modern times also often praise feminine beauty. The ideal figure of a woman quoted by Davy, which was learnt from a Kandyan courtier, is an image projected by both classical and folk literature,

> "Her hair should be voluminous, like the tail of the peacock; long, reaching to the knees, and terminating in graceful curls; her eyebrows should resemble the rainbow; her eyes the blue sapphire and the petals of the blue manila-flower. Her nose should be like the bill of the hawk; her lips should be bright and red, like coral on the young leaf of the iron-tree. Her teeth should be small, regular, and closely set, and like jessamine buds. Her neck should be large and round, resembling the berrigodea. Her chest should be capacious; her breasts, firm and conical, like the yellow cocoa-nut, and her waist small-almost small enough to be clasped by the hand. Her hips should be wide; her limbs tapering; the soles of her feet, without any hollow, and the surface of her body in general, soft, delicate, smooth, and rounded, without the asperities of projecting bones and sinews" (Davy 1821: 110-111).

It is important to understand whether the artists of the time were also manipulated by this social consensus or not. Artists tended to distinguish sex difference in a few ways, In particular by indicating the breasts. As discussed in Chapter 4, artists indicated breasts to show the difference between monk and nuns. They were sometimes also changed the shape of the breast according to the age of women. The best example of this principle can be seen at Degaldoruwa RMV, with the women who gather around the well in the story of *Vessantara Jātaka*. The artist illustrates upward breasts in the figure of Amitatapa, a young woman, newly wedded. Conversely, the mature women who flocked together around the well to fetch water were visualised with downward breasts (Figure 3a). Similarly, the old women depicted in Rekawa RMV, Telwatta RMV and Asgiri Gedige RMV are given pendulous breasts (Figures 119 a-c and 120). Breast-feeding women were also depicted with full, but downward breasts. It is prominent that the majority of women who are shown dancing and playing music instruments, decorative motifs such as *Nāri-latā* and female goddesses, were portrayed with round and firm breasts (Figures 31-32). This demonstrates to us that age was a considerable factor in the way artists defined the sexual appearance of women.

Colour was also used by artists in ancient Egypt to distinguish sexual appearance in art (Eaverly 2008: 1-12). The gender notion that delicacy and tenderness were female traits may have encouraged artists in painting such idealised images. In contrast, artists of pre-modern times did not strictly pursue a universal notion of gender identity. However,

we cannot directly prove that pre-modern artists always practised this. In some places, pre-modern artists occasionally depicted men and women using dark colours and light colours (Figure 121a). In scenes with a royal couple, in Sailabimbarama PV and Potgul Maliga MV, the skin colour of the King is darker than that of the Queen. The application of colour was occasionally determined by other factors such as age, character and social status. For instance, the skin colour of both old men and women is depicted as darker than other human figures. Velikotuwa PV, Telwatta RMV and Asgiri Gedige RMV, Sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda, and Sailabimbarama PV present such old men and women figures filled with dark blue. Here, the artists have not considered the gender factor but the age of the human being (Figure119). As mentioned above, it is interesting to note that human figures were darkened by the artists to reflect the disposition or the character defined in the original story. The figures of the executioners in the story of *Culla-Dharmapala Jātaka* were depicted in dark colour (Figure121b). Similarly, Brahmin Jujaka in *Vessantara Jātaka*, based on his old age and character is presented in blue or black (Figures 97a, c-d and 98). In Sunandarama PV, Amitatapa in the same story appears in dark blue. It is argued that the aggressive behavior of Amitatapa, beating her husband and controlling him, may have motivated the artist to darken her complexion. The colour of the female body was also determined by the social status of the person subjected in the murals. This is depicted in two opposite ways. At Sunandarama PV and Velikotuwa PV, the application of light colours is used for elites and dark colours for those of low rank. The artist of the Velikotuwa PV follows this notion of applying light yellow to both King and Queen in the story of *Culla-Dharmapala Jātaka* whilst the servant who is presented as a fly whisk bearer appears in yellow ochre, which is darker (Figure 121c). This is one of the universal methods used by the artist.[159] Conversely, the application of dark colours for elites and light colours for those of low rank may be used. The artist of Medawala TV has used a pink colour for the female servant whilst all elite men and women are coloured in yellow (Figures 2a, 65b). As discussed in Chapter 4 in the section about female servants, the firm notion of the Kandyan territory that the women of low castes were very beautiful and fair may have encouraged the portrayal.

[159] Based on this factor, Smith interprets the women in the Sigiri Frescoers in Sri Lankan (fifth century) as the mistress and servants (Smith 1911)

Hair styles also helped the artist to show the sexual difference of male and female figures in pre-modern murals. As described by Davy, voluminous hair was considered a feature of feminine beauty (Davy 1821: 110). In the same manner, the majority of artists tended to give very long and voluminous hair to women. Likewise, it is noted that the women commonly twisted their hair in to a large knot. It is clear, however, that men in the murals were also depicted with long hair; sometime loose or knotted and this is corroborated by textual sources. In this sense, it is noted that both men and women of the time had long hair but by means of showing volume, women's hair was outstanding. The visual examples of the majority of temples including Degaldoruwa RMV, Velikotuwa PV, Sailabimbarama PV, Samudragiri PV, Ranvella PV and Purvarama PV present male figures with moustaches or beards which the artist used to emphasize masculinity.

The pre-modern artist embedded gender identity into the human figures of their visual narrations. The primary data analysis demonstrates the intention of the artists to indicate gender difference. The "appearance cause" (Rosemary 2002: 88), such as clothing, ornamentation, and body modifications was a significant aspect of determining cultural values (Nelson 2002: 11-12). The subsequent paragraphs discuss such embodiments as clothing, ornamentation, and body modifications employed by the artists to distinguish gender identity. There were several factors which determined the clothing patterns and ornamentations of women in pre-modern society. They are gender, age, social status, religious status, occupation, occasion, area, place of living, and foreign influences.

According to the social archaeological approach, garments and jewelry were important factors indicating social status. "The body becomes the bearer of cultural signs. Dress is thus a mode of non-verbal communication, if not a language, at least a system of signification" (Wickremasinghe 2003: 2). Therefore, this study examines the gender identity of women through body modifications inorder to give gender interpretations. Remarkably, a number of textual sources, mainly foreign records, provide detailed descriptions about the garments and jewelry of pre-modern Sri Lankan Sinhalese. As a result, these can be compared with the depiction of murals to provide a more in-depth view. At the same time, the garments and jewelry of the time, which are now exhibited in museums, are used in a comparative study to understand their actual use. This section looks at the factors and the social notions which determined the manner of dressing

women's bodies, and at the same time, how the same clothing patterns and ornaments had been used by men, as well as the gender approach of artist's of dressing the female body.

For centuries, artists have symbolically used dress as a tool of indicating gender difference of societies around the world (Nelson 2002: 11-12), and this is also common in pre-modern murals. The dressing pattern of women as depicted in murals clearly differ from that of men, at all levels of society. There are, however, some notable characteristics items which were commonly used by both men and women (Coomaraswamy 1908: 34). For example, the upper garment of elite men and women in the up county was a jacket with a *manta*, or frilled collar. The murals of Madawala TV, Degaldoruwa RMV and Talawa RMV (Figure 65b 115a 75b) show such garments. The museum objects and the travellers' sketches also convice the usage of such garments (figures 122-123) Used with with descriptions from textual sources, a picture can be created of men and women's clothing of the period.

"The middling classes of the men wear sleeved waistcoats or jackets of white muslin; the women short shifts; and both sexes the lower use ment of printed cotton, reaching nearly down to the ankles" (Cordiner 1807: 95-96). There were some slight differences in the upper and lower garments worn by men and women. In particular, the upper garments of women were always tight to the body to amplify their feminine beauty. Therefore, it can be argued that the artists dressed the female body according to a gender construct. It is interesting to note that the dressing pattern of women was comparatively more elegant than that of men. As Knox noted, "the women in their Apparel do far surpass the men, neither are they so curious in clothing themselves as in making their wives fine. The mens Pride consists in their Attendance, having men bearing Arms before and behind them" (Knox 1681: 89)

This statement suggests us that the outer dressing of the wife was a crucial factor, as bearers of the social status of the husband. This is reflected in mural evidence, where women have the finest clothes in relation to the men.The dress of a woman was mainly determined by her age. It is evident that young women observed a different mode of dressing in their daily life from adults. The young women enjoyed much-decorated garments, while the mature women admired simplicity in comparison. At the same time,

old women had an entirely different dress code. The painting of *Uraga Jātaka* in Medawala TV clearly shows the different modes of dressing according to the age. Both elite women wear the usual dress code of Kandyan women mentioned above. However, the elegance of the upper garment of the young woman has been increased with some decorations (Figure 65b). The visual images of Telwatta RMV, Asgiri Gedige RMV and Velikotuwa PV (Figures 119-120) show that the old women cover only their lower body using a very small piece of cloth: without decoration and not colourful. At the same time the length of the cloth does not go beyond the knee. The physical weakness of the very old women may have prevented them from wearing long clothes.

One's social status was also one of the main factors in determining female dress, a trait observed by foreign travellers. Knox tells us how society was strict about the social notion of dressing and social stratification,

> "the Men wear down half their Legs, and the Women to their Heels: one end of which Cloth the Women fling over their Shoulders, and with the very end carelesly cover their Breasts; whereas the other sort of Women must go naked from the wast upwards, and their Cloaths not hang down much below their Knees: except it be for cold; for then either Women or Men may throw their Cloth over their Backs. But then they do excuse it to the Hondrews, when they meet them, saying, Excuse me, it is for warmth" (Knox 1681: 71)

As stated by Knox, both men and women of lower castes were not allowed to cover their upper bodies and they should even remove the piece of cloth which was used to prevent the cold when they met high caste people. This social notion was strictly followed by the mural artists of the time. In the *Uraga Jātaka* painting at Medawala TV (Figure 65b), the scene showing the carrying of food to the field strongly confirms Knox's account. While the two elite women wear the finest clothes which cover both upper and lower garments, the female servant who joins them to provide service wears a very simple cloth, only covering the lower body. Her bare upper body is the artist's metaphorical sign to indicate the difference in social stratification.

Women representing royalty are shown wearing very elegant and fine clothes. In contrast, the servants and other women who provide assistance are in very simple attire. In the palace scenes, the artist uses dress to distinguish the different social status. Almost every artist follows this convention. The elegance of the garments and the abundant jewelry of the queens are substantially grander than that of the women who

perform the royal services. In the palace scene in Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, the Queen has been given prominence by increasing the amount of her jewelry, decoration of her clothes and by covering her head and shoulders by a cloth. The other women who act as her attendants are dressed less prominently, they just cover their shoulders with the cloths.

Scenes of shops and kitchens also show women dressed according to their rank in the work place. Women working in the kitchen in murals at Kotte RMV (Figure 76) clearly demonstrate this. The women who serve food cover their upper and lower bodies with a cloth, and they are much more graceful than the other kitchen women. At the same time, the women involved in cooking and preparing food cover only their lower body, and it can be argued that the artist distinguished social identities through dress.

Women's religious status also affected their appearance in murals. Here, we examine whether the religious activities of the laywomen required any particular dress code. As noted by foreign travelers (Knox 1681: 80-94), people used their finest clothes for religious pilgrimages. At the same time, common women depicted in the murals of Potgul Maliga MV (Figure 16), are shown with bare upper bodies which indicates that they attended the religious places in a similar dress to that worn at home. In the scene of Sujata's alms-giving, women appear to use the same dress code as home to visit the temple.The murals of Bambaragala RMV (Figure 12a and f), however, show Sujata in a more elaborate jacket than that worn at home; she also wears more jewelry, a very long necklace and a pendant, which suggests a significant difference in dress code for visiting religious places. Her hair style is the same but has the addition of a hair pin to adorn the knotted hair. It can be considered from this that women of the high classes did change their dress when they visited religious places. In *Vessantara Jātaka*, Mandri is shown in the forest dressed entirely differently to her appearance in the palace (Figure 34c-e). The original story says that whole family changed their clothes according to their new religious life at the forest as hermits. The most notable feature is that both husband and wife are in similar garments; made of a yellowish or brownish, dotted printed material, an absence of jewelry and with the same hair styles which is a knot on the top of the head. It is clear that the artists considered their religious status to be more significant than their royalty or gender.

Women's dress was determined by the occasion, for instance, bathing, sleeping, going out, or staying at home are most prominent events depicted by the artists. Knox states that,

> "In their houses the women regard not much what dress they go in, but so put on their cloths as is most convenient for them to do their work. But when they go abroad, and make themselves fine, They wear a short Frock with sleeves to cover their bodies of fine white Callico wrought with blew and red Thread in flowers and branches: on their Arms Silver Bracelets, and their fingers and toes full of Silver Rings, about their necks, Necklaces of Beads or Silver, curiously wrought and engraven, guilded with Gold, hanging down so low as their brests. In their ears hang ornaments made of Silver set with Stones, neatly engraven and guilded. Their ears they bore when they are young, and rowl Coker-nut leaves and put into the holes to stretch them out, by which means they grow so wide that they stand like round Circles on each side of their faces, which they account a great ornament, but in my Judgment a great deformity, they being well featured women" (Knox 1681: 89-90).

It is clear that women changed their dress to go out, But when at home, they wore simple dress to cover only the lower part of the body. The queens in *Vessantara Jātaka*, as shown at Medawala TV and Degaldoruwa RMV, are presented with bare upper bodies though they were royalty. At the same time, the elite women in *Uraga Jātaka* in Medawala TV, are depicted with nude upper bodies when at home, though they wear decorated elegant jackets for their journeys out of the home. The climate and the convenience for the household activities may have been the reason for baring the upper bodies of both men and women in the country. The artists do not show the notion of shame when they depict the female body. However, as Wickremasinghe stated, the colonial influence in the low-country, particularly at end of nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, shaped the women's appearance according to the Victorian dress code (Wickremasinghe 2003: 17). The artists of the time in the low-country reinforced these social notions in their visual imagery, and as a result, women were presented fully covered.

The foreign impact upon Sri Lankan culture in pre-modern times was a notable feature which directed the artist to shape the outer appearance of the female body. The influence of South India in the up country and European influence in the low-country are prominent. The dress of upper-class women often resembled South Indian garments (Coomaraswamy 1908: 34). It is notable that the images of the chief queen in the murals of the early part of the pre-modern period, in both up-and low-country, show an unusual

accessory, where most of the body is covered by a '*mottakkiliya*' kerchief (a long cloth) (Figure 124-125).[160] At the same time, a new garment called '*ohoriya'*, shownworn by queens in Hindagala RMV (Figure 129a) was also a new introduction to pre-modern Sri Lankan culture and was a direct impact of South Indian Tamil costumes (Coomaraswamy 1908). This was a result of the marital relationships of Kandyan Kings, who fetched queens from South India.[161] The women of the low-country upper-class were correspondingly depicted with European gowns and jackets. The murals of the late nineteenth century from Purvarama PV, Karagampitiya RMV, Gangarama PV and Samudragiri PV witness the new fashions adopted by upper-class women. Footwear was a privilege granted only by the king (Knox 1681: 67-68), but women in the murals of Purvarama PV, Subodarama RMV, Gangarama PV, and Subadrarama PV all have footwear, which became fashionable due to the European influence.

Hair styles as a form of body modification secured a prominent place in defining female identity. Though the most common hair style of women is the knot, the shape of the knot varied remarkably. At the same time, different ornamentations such as flowers, crowns, hats, hair pins, ribbons and ropes of pearls (Figure 126) were used by artists to decorate the female hair. The use of crowns and hats in hair ornamentation came with the European influence, and is a prominent feature of female figures in Udammita PV, Purvarama PV and Subodarama RMV (Figure 104b). The wide variety of hair pins displayed in Colombo, Kandy, University of Peradeniya and the British Museum (Figure 126) show the actual use of hair pins by women and the shape of these pins tally with the artists' portrayals (Figure 12f). Female hair adorned with pearls, as depicted in murals, shows the imitation of South Indian jewelry. The scene of women in the murals of Gangarama RMV in the up-country is the finest example of this (Figure10a). It is noted that the hair styles of men in murals were not decorated in the same way as women. Only the kings are shown wearing a crown, as a symbol of royalty but not as a decoration. In this respect, it is clear that the artists contrived, by use of hair styles and headdresses, to visualize the gender difference.

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[160] This is traditionally called as '*mottakkiliya'*

[161] see Chapter 1

Other parts of the body, ears, neck, chest, middles, hand and legs of the female figures were adorned with jewelry (Figure 127-129). The pre-modern murals present a range of jewelry worn by women, including headgear, forehead plates, ear-rings, chains, pendants, breast cups, breast bands, waist pendants, girdles, armlets, bangles, finger-rings, and anklets. It is notable that women had more abundant jewelry than men. The majority of these devices were worn by the queens and elites, however, the figures of kings also had an abundance of attire.

Finally, it can be noted that women's attire was one of the vehicles of gender identity and the outfits of men and women were defined by the socio-cultural norms of society. The body ornamentation of the pre-modern murals was always determined by the dress etiquettes of the time and the artists tended to represent women as a group who were fashion conscious. Women's garments and jewelry, as depicted in murals, mark a significant set of socio-cultural items which resemble contemporary textual accounts. At the same time, the outer appearance of the women depicted by the artist was a social construct which mirrored gender and social stratification, as well as showing the huge impact of foreign influence on respective societies.

Archaeological gender research around the world theorizes the practice of gendered objects associated with men and women (Nelson 2002: 235-238; Linduff 2002: 257-275). We can examine whether the artists of the pre-modern times embued male and female figures with any gendered object. The primary data analysis demonstrates that this notion was practiced to a certain extent. The main objects used by artists to distinguish gender identity were swords and flowers. The figures of kings depicted in most of the temples are associated with swords which were a symbol of power (Figure 130). It is remarkable that the artists tended to place a sword in the hand of Prince Vessantara in the *Vessantara Jātaka*, even when he is in the forest hermitage, after his renunciation of the princely life at the palace (Figures 49a and 130b). It can be seen that artists have placed a flower or a hand-held fan in the hand of royal women, for instance the queens and concubines of the royal palace depicted in Hindagala RMV, Purvarama PV, Karagampitiya PV and Gangarama PV hold a flower or a folded fan (Figure 131-132). The use of a fan is in imitation of European female fashions. The use of such objects associated with men or women demonstrates to us the artists' perception of gender identity through gendered objects; swords for masculinity and flowers for

femininity. Thus man was a symbol of power and woman a symbol of delicacy and pulchritude.

In conclusion, this chapter shows the social relations and the gender relations visualized in the murals. The scenes of marriages, travelling and obeisance illuminate the phenomenon of gender relations. The power of the bride's father is remarkable in the ceremonial activities and he had a prominent place among the attendants. In this respect, the marriage scenes in murals often projected a patriarchal image of the ceremony. The murals of the time are a rich source of materials to understand the travelling methods and the modes of using them. The visual evidence demonstrates that there were some restrictions for women in using some methods such as riding animals, The location of the female figure in the seating or walking order discloses the perception of the artist towards women as a group which were socially vulnerable. The female identity as depicted by the artists through weeping scenes and body ornamentation clearly demonstrates that they attributed some stereotypical gender characteristics to women. As a result, women were portrayed as compassionate, sensitive and tender. At the same time, these were mechanisms to distinguish sexual and gender identity. The female identity projected by the artist through body ornamentation and employing gendered objects conveyed an ideal and reinforced social consensus. In this respect, the body modification in murals evidently reveals the social landscape of the time and space of pre-modern Sri Lanka.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the visual representation of women as depicted in pre-modern Sri Lankan murals which set out a meaningful portrayal of women in different social contexts. Notwithstanding gender and the historical role of women as progressive research areas after 1980 in the international archaeological arena, the social archaeology of Sri Lankan women is still an obscure area of research. The obscured role of women in Sri Lankan archaeological historiography has portrayed a false impression to contemporary society, that women in history were not socially engaged and remained in the background. The consideration of women in conventional historiography has narrowed the varying role of women through time and space. The many gaps and omissions in the archaeological research on women in Sri Lanka aroused my curiosity. It led me towards bridging the gap and creating, for the first time, a cross-regional archaeological study on women. The social role of women in conventional androcentric literature also encouraged me to pursue murals as material evidence in a comparative study to engender the historiography. This chapter combines concluding stand points of the research. It summarizes the research findings discussed throughout the previous chapters and bring together the main areas covered in the research, enabling the recollection of the significance of the research and its expositions. Comments and judgments on the research findings are presented here. Finally, suggestions and recommendations are made for future research in the field.

My main research question concerned the position of women in pre-modern Sri Lanka as depicted in the murals of the time. Hence this research recorded the primary data on a problem-oriented and issue-related platform, and data were collected to address a range of research questions:

- What are the roles played by women?
- What was the nature of social ideology in attributing gender roles to women and division the of labour?
- Did society restrict the role of women to solely the domestic sphere?
- Did society treat women as a vulnerable social group?
- What was the nature of the power of gender and gender relationships?
- Did society subordinate women and discriminate based on gender?
- What were the limitations confining the social behaviour of women?
- What were the identity and gender characteristics attributed to women?

Focusing on the above questions, this research used murals as the primary sources as they are a medium which prescribe the social role of women of the time. The following conclusions can be drawn from the present study.

Throughout the ages conventional sources, generated by the great literary tradition of the country, belittled the role of women. In contrast, mural paintings provide a rich multi-vocality created by different artists from different localities including urban, suburban and rural settings and they evoke diverse social attitudes which determined and prescribed the social behaviour of women. They shed a new light upon the history of women in pre-modern Sri Lanka.The murals that embellished the walls of Buddhist temples constructed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, provide information on social landscapes and certain social dynamics. The mural paintings are generally taken to be decorative, but this research has considered their value for deciphering coded forms of communication and a visual language which reflects the social dynamics of the time. Primary data was collected through field and museum surveys, using a cross-regional approach, covering the low-country and up-country, which allowed an investigation of the attitudinal variations towards women through time and space. It is evident that this visual imagery is not a single, segregated perception but rather a multiplicity of perceptions produced by different artists, each reflecting a diverse set of social norms in respective socio-cultural contexts. Iconographic analysis and the social archaeology of gender have been applied as the main methodological and theoretical approaches in this study. The social space occupied by women has been examined through three different streams which discuss the religious life, gender roles and social identity within this multi-dimensional art form.

Distinguishing the religious space occupied by women is important, as the main sources of the study are essentially a form of Buddhist art. The study suggests that women played a vital role in the wellbeing of religious institutions in the country. Accordingly, both archaeological and literary sources convince us that the *Bhikkhuṇī* order (the order of nuns) was active and influential from the early historic period through to the medieval period of the country. Unfortunately, the order of nuns had ceased from late medieval times and this affected the religious freedom of women towards their liberation. There were attempts made by women to reinstate the order of nuns and, as indicated in murals, the concept of nuns remained alive in the memory of pre-modern

society. As royalty in the eighteenth century did not initiate a revival of female renunciation, the mural artists of the periods reflected popular memories of nuns in their art. Figures of nuns were a rare subject in pre-modern murals, and depictions by the artists of the period reproduced society's preconceptions. Artists implemented several methods to depict the role of nuns; using metaphors to indicate differences of gender, through spiritual status, apparel and naming. This absence of the order of nuns suggests to us the degeneration of Buddhist ethics; nuns are the female halves of gender pairs of the egalitarian fourfold Buddhist social organization as prescribed in early Buddhism. On the other hand, the methods the artists used in depicting nuns in visual representations showed a gender bias which implied a social consensus which discouraged female renunciation.

The pre-modern period saw the emergence of laywomen who were religiously engaged, and this was vividly depicted in both up-and low-country murals of the time. This idea was pursued through the depiction of meritorious religious practices in which women vigorously participated; visiting religious places, alms-giving, listening to Buddhist sermons, and participating in religious festivals. As discussed in chapter four, the evidence for women as religious patrons is occasionally found in archaeological evidence, and this is corroborated by contemporary literary sources. In three places, it is notable that women were eager to display their religious sentiments as patrons of temple murals and other religious donations during the pre-modern period. The murals of the second image house of Garakmedilla RMV contain evidence for unprecedented women's patronage in religious institutions during the late colonial period. The murals of Garakmedilla RMV distinctively convince us of female domination as patrons of Buddhism in the late colonial period, because of the decline of the traditional feudal social system and the colonial socio-religious reformations. Both murals and texts have ample evidence to enrich understanding of the generosity of women as a daily practice. Notwithstanding that the origins of the stories go back to early Buddhist times, all these depictions were contextualized according to the socio-religious ideology of the time and the artists, resulting in a mirror upon contemporary society. So then, the lay women's characters of the historical stories were replaced by village women of the time. In respect of the story of Sujata's alms-giving from literature, as presented in rural murals, the women who offer alms to Buddha are no longer the classical figures to the viewer.

The religiosity of women, and prominent women with responsibility for the next generation, may have encouraged artists to depict familiar women role models within a religious sphere.

The position of laywomen is metaphorically represented by the artists as the catalyst in the procedure of social reformation. Hence both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be recognized as a time of political instability which resulted in the degeneration of the conventional Sinhalese Buddhist socio-cultural background, and consequently the significance of murals as a vehicle towards social reformation is outstanding. Nevertheless some missionary prejudices distort the religious freedom enjoyed by the pre-modern woman as a lay devotee, so the murals of the time are a testimony to the active engagement of women in the religious sphere. In this sense it suggests that regardless of gender; the artists perpetuated the role of laywomen beyond the household on one hand and, on the other, the visual imagery prescribed the discourse of preparing ideal the laywomen to represent Buddhist ethics and bear the cultural norms of society. The perception of society enthusiastically aimed women's religious freedom at the role of laywoman, and the path of eternal liberation through the order of nuns remained repressed. There is no evidence for any attempt by the religio-political authority to revive the order of nuns in Sri Lanka, by importing the order from Thailand or Burma, where there would have been an active order of nuns at this time. At the same time, the religious life of female servants in the elite houses was considerably confined by the traditional social organization of the pre-modern times. In this respect, it should be clearly noted that women representing all social stratas were not privileged to enjoy religious freedom and women were not always able to experience the religious role which was the privilege of men and the ordained. Even so, the position of the lay women was generally considered to be satisfactory.

The well-established social norm of women as a symbol of auspiciousness and fortune and the aspects of protection, guardianship, fertility and motherhood are highlighted in female cults is vigorously visualized by the pre-modern artists. As followed in Buddhist architecture throughout South Asia across time, it is noteworthy that the entrances of monastic complexes and their buildings were ornately embellished with a multitude of decorations, and the association of anumber of female figures at the entrances of image houses stands out in pre-modern Sri Lanka. In order to cater for the cultural diversity of

pre-modern times, the tradition of placing female figures at religious entrances had been expanded significantly to absorb numerous religious cults of the 'little' tradition into the main pantheon. The concept of the earth goddess was elevated to a high religio-cultural status because of her strong contribution to the highest spiritual status of the Buddha's life. The continuity of this religious idea is strongly evident in pre-modern Sri Lankan murals and they corroborate the social consensus regarding the potential for women to be witness to their greatest religious personality.

The frequent presence of the earth goddess as a popular subject in murals highlights the religious authority and hierarchy acquired by the goddess in the religious ideology of the time, regardless of her gender. The diversity and the cultural space occupied by women as symbols of prosperity and fortune demanded the enshrinement of female figures in the Buddhist image house. As a result, female cults which venerated women as goddesses are well represented as subjects of the murals. The presence of the earth goddess marks her reputable position in the pre-modern Sri Lankan religious ideology. The concept of fertility: the metaphor for the reproductive potential of women and auspiciousness have been valued by the artist placing female figures such as *nāri-latā* and composite figures at the entrances. The Goddess Lakshmi as auspicious and promoting good luck, can be often recognized in pre-modern art forms. It is notable that the figure of Lakshmi was replaced by the figure of Queen Victoria by the end of the nineteenth century, particularly in the low-county painting tradition. It was also common to write the name of the temple in English just below the Queen's figure, and to frame it with the British emblem. The building of temples where her figure is depicted at the main entrances coincided with the year of Queen Victoria's jubilee, and they may mark the contributors' celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee of the Queen as the ruler of the country. Placing Her Majesty's figure at the entrance of the most venerable locations, portrays it as a symbol of prosperity and of the unity of religious ideology to low-country people, as well as the supremacy of the Queen. This locational significance: the association of women at the entrance which secure a prominent space in the temple architecture persuades the viewers the lay devotes of the society about the importance of women in the continuation of the society

The religious aspects hidden in this imagery confers and prescribes different social responsibilities attributed to women by each cultural context. In order to work for the

sake of the well-being of society, the murals of the time consigned a vital role to women. They disclosed the retribution of failings, plus the consequences of good deeds which encouraged women towards an ideal life filled with meritorious acts. In this respect, the story of Patachara, Soreyya, *Andabhutha, Vessantara, Ksantivadi*, and the depiction of heaven and hell can be highlighted as subjects which fit the prerequisite social consensus. At the same time, some artists provided other religious opportunities not attributed to them in the original stories. In *Vessantara Jātaka*, the figure of Mandri as an ascetic can be noted for example. Furthermore, the emergence of women as composers and patrons of religious books and the creators of new stories depicting the potential of women as aspiring Buddhas, stands for the egalitarian approach of the peasants, particularly of the up-country, towards women. All this evidence suggests that women of the time were allowed a vigorous religious participation. Even so, artists occasionally attributed some universal stereotyped gender characteristics to women, though such implications were not found in the original stories. Women's characteristics such as tenderness, fear, sensitivity, grief and agony, were highlighted in this manner. It can be seen that the artists' perspective towards weeping and gender attempts to understand the social consensus of gender identity that encouraged artists to shape their visual liturgies. The instance of Madawala TV in the up-country and Sunandarama PV in the low-country show such portrayals, which convince us of the notion that women's characteristics are more influential than that of their religious consciousness. However, the artists of the time were flexible in their presentation of a combination of optimistic, pessimistic and neutral gender characters in their imagery in both regions.

The visual representation of an extensive range of the roles played by women is an advantage which enables us to define the nature of the division of labour at the time. The concept of motherhood, which has generally been assigned to women in many different cultures around the world for centuries, is emphasized in the murals, and the presence of plentiful figures of women in the act of breast-feeding is also remarkable. At the same time the caring, affectionate, sensitive, mothering qualities of women are constantly highlighted. The depiction of *Culla Dharmapāla Jātaka* very often shows the viewer the bond and close affection of a mother towards an infant, and the harrowing loss of her infant at the end. The *Vessantara Jātaka Kāvya*, the poetic versions of *Vessantara Jātaka* produced by folk tradition, also emotionally describes the heart-

rending lamentation of Mandri. In the same manner, the lamentation of Mandri in visual representations of *Vessantara Jātaka*, at the separation from her offspring, is distressingly depicted by the artists, reinforcing the idea of the role of mother as an embodiment of compassion.

As prescribed in literary sources, there are several responsibilities which are assigned to women by society and these domestic activities are denominated as 'women's work' or 'women's business' in pre-modern Sri Lanka. This social notion indicates a gendered division of labour prevalent during the time. Women were prescribed to provide different services for their husbands; serving food is one of the highlighted areas by the artists. The concepts of 'child rearing', 'cooking', and 'cleaning' as gendered domestic tasks, however, is challenged by the primary sources of this research. It is evident that caring for children was one of the responsibilities of the woman in her role as mother, but mural depictions suggest that men were also directly involved in child-rearing as a shared responsibility, and this visual evidence is corroborated by contemporary textual sources and folk literature. Cooking and cleaning were identified as 'women's work' in literary sources, yet the involvement of men in both activities is evident from murals, particularly in the low-country. In that sense, this research challenges the notion of gendered divisions of labour and suggests to us that the gender roles of pre-modern households was flexible and interchangeable and the economic self-reliance of women which empowered them within the household.

The visual representations of royal palaces, however, demonstrated some shared work and gendered work, taking into account the ideas of the physical weakness of women and their use for male comfort. At the royal palace, it is remarkable that most of the light services and those linked with personal comfort were entirely assigned to women. Services related to paying respect or honour and handling heavy equipment were carried out by male attendants. As a result, it can be argued that these functional positions presented by the artists were always based upon gender and social consensus on the division of labourand gender identity. This suggests to us that preconceptions about the function of ideal gender division were rooted in the artists' minds in regards to labour in the royal palace.

This research shows women's empowerment as socially engaged beings related to their involvement in domestic activities and beyond, and that society placed women in a wider context of activities. The social capital and the contribution of women in the household economy are depicted in the visual language of the time. Similarly, the men involved in domestic tasks are also visualized. Such evidence may be used to challenge the notion of 'gendered division of labour' and 'women in the private sphere and men in the public sphere' in pre-modern Sri Lanka. This signifies to us that there was not a gender ideology rooted in pre-modern Sri Lankan artists' minds or extreme representations of domestic women and public men. Even so, at the same time, the artists promoted the stereo-typed roles of women.

Though the artists of the 'great' tradition sometimes show the Queen *suckling her infant child whilst the King handles political affairs in the annexed pavilion, t*he artists of the village temples place the Queen in front of the King when they sit in the palace to receive guests. The hand gestures of the Queen in most of these scenes suggest that she was also involved in decision-making. The political history of contemporary Sri Lanka also testifies to the political empowerment of the women, as heiress to the throne, and of how the position of Queen decided the successors. Though the artist rarely places men and women separately in houses or palaces, both are often depicted in the same places; the mutual conversations of the King and Queen in the same pavilion, or husband and wife in the kitchens. This suggests that the notion of gendered space was not seriously practiced or considered among peasants in pre-modern times and the power of women in shaping the social order though they did not crowned with mastery.

Literary sources state that women's education at the time had been very much neglected and the level of female literacy was significantly low, whilst the women representing both the elites and the commoners rarely displayed their literacy. Likewise, it is difficult to discover the status of women's education from the murals of the time. The only evidence comes from Degaldoruwa RMVin the up-country, in scenes of *Sattubatta Jātaka*. This has panels in which an equal number of men and women are studying with a teacher, and it outwardly proclaims the idea of gender equality as claimed by Kiribamune (2013). Conversely, it can be seen as an aesthetic device used by the artist to balance the panel with equal numbers of men and women flanking the teacher on one hand, and as a way of emphasizing the stereotyped gender roles embedded in the moral

point of the story on the other. This story teaches the expected behaviour for an ideal stereotypical wife. In this respect, the presence of women is mandatory to the artist's story telling but does not show a gender equality in literacy. Women's education changed with the Colonial reformations, which gave more opportunities by opening up education to women. As a result, the murals of the low-country have representations which signify some indirect circumstances of female intelligence. The presence of *Ummagga Jātaka* and the representation of the Amaradevi, the intelligent woman who judiciously resolves several issues at the royal palace in Ranvella PV and Uttamarama PV, is an example of that. It should be noted that the involvement of women as the patrons of murals of both temples may also have influenced the artists to produce such roles of women. However, both suggest that educational empowerment increased women's freedoms.

The visual representations of pre-modern times are rich material evidence which show new dimensions of the social identity of women and the status of gender relations. This research amplifies the presence of gender hierarchy and the power of gender in marriages in pre-modern culture. Prominence was given to the role of the men, specifically fathers, in marriage ceremonies with female figures in secondary positions; decisions were made by fathers, ceremonial acts were performed by fathers, the emphasis on the compulsory participation of fathers marginalized women at wedding feasts, and fathers handed over the responsibilities of taking care of the wife to the husband. At the same time, the dress code of the married couple and the attendees witnessed the imitation of European fashions and colonial influence upon Sri Lankan society particularly in the low-country. Evidence of placing women in murals in order to give them special attention by means of scale is also noteworthy in selected localities in the low-country.

It is noted that women were subject to gender discrimination in travelling as depicted in the murals of pre-modern Sri Lanka. Placing women before men in walking scenes and behind men in travelling carriages meant that society accepted that women were socially vulnerable. Likewise, it is evident that the scale, position and the gestures of women demarcated gender relationships in respective social contexts and the expectation of society to place women in a secondary position in relation to the men. This suggests that gender difference was marked; the notion that the wife should be physically smaller

than the husband, women should listen and obey the men, and women should be seated below men. As visualized in murals, older women had a more privileged position of power in the house than younger women. They were respected by the younger generation and were responsible for a considerable number of household matters such as meeting guests, leading journeys and decision making. This gives a sense that age was a decisive factor in power relationsin the pre-modern society.

This study has unveiled the role of women which was obscured in traditional Sri Lankan archaeological historiography, and the results of the research offer an alternative explanation that contextualizes the women in pre-modern history. This thesis is the first of its kind undertaken in Sri Lanka as a pliriminary, cross-regional study, with a view to understanding the portrayal of women in temple murals in their social context during the pre-modern periods.The findings from this study make several contributions to the current literature. First, it fills some gaps in the social history of women, providing a picture of socially engaged women. Secondly, it characterizes the vital role of women in the religious sphere, where they made strenuous efforts to maintain Buddhist religious practices. Thirdly, it shows the involvement of women in domestic activities and beyond. The current findings add to a growing body of literature on flexible gender roles beyond the historical misconstruction. At the same time, this study accords with existing literature regarding some topics, particularly relating to stereotyped gender characteristics and gender identity.

These findings provide the following insights for future research. Since this is a preliminary research rather than undertaking a more complex ‘second phase analysis, a series of analytical studies should be carried out on the places not included in this study, in order to obtain a more complete histrory of women across the whole country. It is recommended that future research be undertaken in several areas. The empirical findings in this study provide a new understanding of the division of labour prevalent during pre-modern times and a possible area of future research would be to investigate how this circumstance is practiced in contemporary Sri Lanka and why ideas changed. Contemporary research assumes the gendered division of labour in historical Sri Lanka without careful examination. The implication of this is the possibility that contemporary society would be enlightened regarding the shared domestic activities of pre-modern society, and this in turn will help to focus upon the domestic burdens of modern women

and increase their status in society. It would be interesting to compare the gender roles depicted in murals with the roles presented in textual sources. This study only concentrated on the gender roles in the textual sources which are comparable with visual representation. The textual sources however, suggest other roles played by women. The role of women in special crafts is an area which has not been fully discussed here. Therefore, I strongly highlight the necessity of launching extensive research on women and their contribution to the traditional crafts and technology of Sri Lanka.

The results of this research support the idea that pre-modern Sri Lankan women were actively involved in some household economic activities, but it is limited to areas such as cattle-rearing and agriculture. It suggests that the association of women with the household economy would be a fruitful area for future, more extensive studies. The participation of women in traditional agriculture is one of the major areas requiring further work. Folk songs and folk stories strongly amplify the energetic contribution of women in planting, weeding, reaping and preparing the harvest. Foreign textual sources also provide a substantial picture regarding this aspect. The division of labour, gender relations and gender identities within the area of agriculture should be explored to understand the significance of women in the household economy.

The findings of this study have a number of important implications for future practice. Understanding murals as a social medium is one. The possibility of murals as descriptive evidence of social behaviour shouts its potential for future social archaeological research. More information about clothing would help to establish an expanded interpretation of social relations. The presence of numerous items of garments and items of jewellery should be treated as the primary data of a separated study. Although the current study is based on a small area of clothing, the findings suggest clothing was used as a metaphor to convey social stratification, gender difference, social hierarchy and power relations, economic stability, foreign influence, cross-cultural relationships, gender roles and ancient creativity and technology. The garments and jewellery that I have identified therefore assist in our understanding of its significance as a silent conveyer of social history.

The present study confirms previous findings, such as the active involvement of women in religious practices, and contributes additional evidence that suggests the emergence of women as religious patrons. Further research needs to examine more closely the link between women and religion in the late colonial period. The local textual sources intimate the socio-cultural context of colonial Sri Lanka as a cultural decline. The rationale of the themes of pre-modern murals is witness to this. The intention of the artists was to use traditional stories to expose the misbehaviour of people at the time. Therefore the role of women as the aspiration for society and the social concensus in constructing the image of women as purifying or reconstructing the society should be examined explicitly.

The research concentrated on the images depicted in murals but this is only one of the source materials which can be employed in Sri Lankan archaeological historiography. This study limited its examination of primary data to selected districts which restricts the interpretation of the history of women throughout the whole country. The present study, however, makes several noteworthy contributions to the social attitudes of contemporary society. On the one hand the findings of this research are a patchwork solution in building the history of women, and it is indispensable when articulating the fragmentary nature of women's history. This research is a corridor to help explore various doors in the closed history of Sri Lankan women. Therefore, it is important to note that the potrayal of women depicted in all archaeological and historical sources should be examined with a multi-disciplinary, cross-cultural and cross-regional approach.

Giving an idea about the social history of pre modern Sri Lankan women pointing out that the women's image which has been confined to a few traditional roll can be taken beyond that, the women in Sri Lanka's history was walking as an inactive individual how has been socially suppressed to be taken out an make her an active participation of the social activities which have been specially assign to men and women have been make flexible to a great extent, in pre-modern Sri Lankan society. Information about higher society dictated by the great tradition literary sources depicting this source of painting and the ability to use painting as sources, identifying historical trends which are treated as alternative to history. Understanding that there are disparities in social

attitudes and women social states, ability to understand a history of populace to be well understood and add it to a history written in to the future.

When we take the modern temple paintings in general it can be identified as folk art which has gone beyond the representation of the elites. It is factual that at the beginning it has received the patronage of royal family and regional elites. Subsequently, art tradition of image houses has reached even remote villages. Peasants collectively subsidized to build their own temple paintings with the contribution of local painters residing in their settings. As a result, the social consensus of respective areas has always been taken into account. Although origins of stories selected by them went back to pre-Christian era, their characters, outlook, incidents have been molded in respective village contexts. Moreover it can be identified how different societies contextualized the same story differently in their respective socio-religious environment. Having given a compassionate look at Mandri of *Vessantara Jātaka* and empathizing her misery, taking action to give her a religious freedom treating her as a person subjected to injustice, is an evidence of art of this era reconstructing according to social environment. Popular sources available for studying history of Sri Lanka very often appear through political events but the social thinking in the real history get hidden through such sources. Pre-modern painting which represent the thinking of a majority of people very often live facet of people's cogitation.

Though the pre-modern paintings show its differences with other sources they do not always reflect an entirely different picture from those of others. There are occasions that these paintings also agree with common social norms. As a result there is a possibility of building up a consistent history which is confirmed by diverse group of sources. In four to seven chapters, in the discussion of social image of women, this theses always presence how the history depicted in murals diverge or comparable with other sources. The most important observation is that these painting consist with innovative ideas and alternative version which cannot be retrieve from any other sources of the time.

The mural paintings of pre-modern Sri Lanka acted as a socio-religious medium and a code of practice at the time. It is evident in the murals that women were treated as cultural icons bearing a social identity. In other words, the murals of the period influenced a woman's life like a religious handbook, shaping her social behaviour,

values and identity. The murals of the ‘great’ tradition represent the ideal practices of the time and the commitment of the artist in reinforcing social concensus. At the same time, the depictions of the artists of provincial traditions offer an alternative profile of energetic and empowered women as opposed to the linear views and a portrait beyond the ideal situations and stereo-types. Finally, it can be argued that artists of the pre-modern murals arrogated the historical themes into their contemporary social contexts and attempted to perpetuate the ideal role of Buddhist women through their visual expressions. With this agenda, the artists weighted and valued the role of mother, who has a boundless compassion, selfless care and the nurturing qualities towards the family in general and towards her offspring in particular. Though the artist sometimes accorded with the conventional roles of femaleness, the visual evidence denounced the passive social behaviour of women. Moreover, the potential of women to perform in both private and public spheres is highlighted while at the same time it challenged a gendered division of labour, thus projecting the flexible attitudes of men in engaging in universal ‘women’s work’. Encoding such metaphors depicted by the artists evidences the potentiality of women to act as effective social beings and the elite-peasant inclusiveness of the visual imagery surmounts the dearth of sources towards reconstructing the social archaeology of Sri Lankan history.

Imaging the Role of Women in Changing Social-Cultural Contexts:

A Study of Female Representations in Murals of Pre-Modern Sri Lanka

Two Volumes

Volume 2: Appendices, Tables, Bibliography and Figures

Dulma Niroshini Karunarathna

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School of History, Classics and Archaeology

Newcastle University

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Appendix 1: List of Jataka Stories Subjected to the Pre-modern Murals

(DDJ) *Dēvadhamma Jātaka* - 06 (Cowell[1] 1895a: 23-26)	06 (Karunatilaka 2004,1: 78-81[2])
(KTJ) *Kaṭṭhahāri Jātaka* - 07 (Cowell 1895a: 27-28)	07 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 82-83)
(KDJ) *Khadiranga Jātaka* - 40 (Cowell 1895a: 100-104)	40 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1:152-158)
(MSJ) *Mahā-sīlava Jātaka* - 51 (Cowell 1895a: 128-132)	51 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 177-181)
(AMJ) *Asātamanta Jātaka* - 61 (Cowell 1895a: 141-156)	61 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 196-200)
(ABJ) *Andhabhūta Jātaka* - 62 (Cowell 1895a: 151-154)	62 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 200-204)
(SNRJ) *Silavanāgarāja Jātaka*- 72 (Cowell 1895a: 172-173)	72 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 225-227)
(SCJ) *Saccamkira Jātaka* - 73 (Cowell 1895a: 177-180)	73 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 227-230)
(TJ) *Tēlapatta Jātaka* - 96 (Cowell 1895a: 232-236)	95 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 292-297)
(CPJ) *Culla-paduma Jātaka* - 193 (Cowell 1895b: 81-84)	192 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 334-336)
(MCJ) *Manicōra Jātaka* -194 (Cowell 1895b: 85-87)	193 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 437-438)

[1] Cowell, E. B. edits the *Jātaka* stories and publishes a collection of 547 stories in six separate volumes entitled *The Jātaka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births*, Vol. I&II (1895), Vol. III (1897) , Vol. IV (1901) , Vol. V (1905) , Vol. VI (1907)

[2] *Jātakaṭṭhakatāva* written in Pali translated in to Sinhala as *Jātaka Pot Vahansē* by the king Pandita Parakkramabahu VI in Kurunegala Period (13th century)

(MJ) *Mandātu Jātaka* -258 (Cowell 1895b: 216-218) 257 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 542-544)

(MPJ) *Mahā-panāda Jātaka* -264 (Cowell 1895b: 229-230) 263 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 551-553)

(KDJ) *Kuru-Dharma Jātaka* - 276 (Cowell 1895b: 251-259) 275 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 570-580)

(KVJ) *Khāntivādi Jātaka* - 313 (Cowell 1897: 26-28) 310 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 634-635)

(LJ) *Lōhakumbhi Jātaka* - 314 (Cowell 1897: 29-31) 311 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 635-638)

(SSJ) *Sasa Jātaka* -316 (Cowell 1897: 34-37) 313 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 640-642)

(UJ) *Uraga Jātaka* - 354 (Cowell 1897: 107-110) 349 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 697-699)

(CDL) *Culla-dammapāla Jātaka* - 358 (Cowell 1897: 117-119) 353 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 704-705)

(SKJ) *Svaṇṇakakkata Jātaka* - 389 (Cowell 1897: 183-185) 382 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 748-750)

(SBJ) *Sattubhatta Jātaka* - 402 (Cowell 1897: 210-215) 396 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 767-770)

(MDJ) *Mahā-dammapāla Jātaka* - 447 (Cowell 1901: 32-34) 441 (Karunatilaka 2004, 1: 880-882)

(MKJ) *Mahā-kanha Jātaka* - 469 (Cowell 1901: 109-110) 462 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 945-977)

(SVJ) *Sivi Jātaka* - 499 (Cowell 1901: 250-256) 491 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 1065-1070)

(HJ) *Hatthipāla Jātaka* - 509 (Cowell 1901: 293-303) 500 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 1106-1115)

(SNJ) *Sōna-Nanda Jātaka* - 531 (Cowell 1905: 164-174) 524 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 1280-1289)

(MSTJ) *Mahā-sutasōma Jātaka* - 537 (Cowell 1905: 246-297) 529 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 1352-1383)

(MPKJ) *Muga-pakkha Jātaka*[3] - 538 (Cowell 1907: 1-18) 530 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 1383-1399)

(MJJ) *Mahājanaka Jātaka* - 539 (Cowell 1907: 19-37) 531 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 1400-1410)

(SAJ) *Sāma Jātaka* - 540 (Cowell 1907: 38-52) 532 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 1411-1419)

(NJ) *Nimi Jātaka* - 541 (Cowell 1907: 53-67) 533 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 1419-1438)

(KHJ) *Khandahāla Jātaka* 542 (Cowell 1907: 68-79) 534 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 1439-1485)

(VPJ) *Vidurapaṇḍita Jātaka* - 545 (Cowell 1907: 120-155) 537 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 1530-1575)

(MUJ) *Mahā-ummagga Jātaka* - 546 (Cowell 1907: 156-245) 538 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 1575-1709)

(VJ) *Vessantara Jātaka* - 547 (Cowell 1907: 246-305) 539 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 1709-1739)

(DJ) *Dahamsonda Jātaka*[4] - 540 (Karunatilaka 2004, 2: 1739-1741)

[3] *Tēmiya Jātaka* is another name for this *Muga-pakkha Jātaka*

[4] this is not included in Cowell's collection

Appendix 2: List of temples included in the field survey

1. Sri Dalada Maligawa, Kandy, Kandy District, Central Province
2. Asgiri Gedige Raja MahaVihara, Kandy, Kandy District, Central Province
3. Nagavimana PuranaVihara, Kandy, Kandy District, Central Province
4. Degaldoruwa Raja MahaVihara, Gunnepana, Kandy District, Central Province
5. Sirimalwatta Raja Maha Vihara, Teldeniya, Kandy District, Central Province
6. Gangarama Raja MahaVihara, Lewella, Kandy District, Central Province
7. Talawa Raja Maha Vihara, Marassana, Kandy District, Central Province
8. Ilupandeniya Raja MahaVihara, Kamburadeniya, Kandy District, Central Province
9. Telambugala Raja Maha Vihara, Gelioya, Kandy District, Central Province
10. Niyamgampaya Raja MahaVihara, Gampola, Kandy District, Central Province
11. Unambuwa TempitaVihara, Unambuwa, Kandy District, Central Province
12. Hindagala Raja Maha Vihara, Hindagala, Kandy District, Central Province
13. Suriyagoda Raja MahaVihara, Kiribatkumbura, Kandy District, Central Province
14. Gadaladeniya Raja MahaVihara, Pilimatalawa, Kandy District, Central Province
15. Veligodapola Tempita Vihara, Hataraliyadda, Kandy District, Central Province
16. Medawala Tempita Vihara, Madawala, Kandy District, Central Province
17. Vagolla Purana Bodhimalu Vihara, Vatapuluwa, Kandy District, Central Province
18. Garakmedilla Raja Maha Vihara, Alawatugoda, Kandy District, Central Province
19. Velikotuwa Purana Vihara, Ganegoda, Matale District, Central Province
20. Katudeniya PuranaVihara, Katudeniya, Matale District, Central Province
21. Pamunuwa Purana Vihara, Valawela, Matale District, Central Province
22. Bodimalu Purana Vihara, Udasgiriya, Matale District, Central Province
23. Sulunapahura Raja MahaVihara, Yatawatta, Matale District, Central Province
24. Dembava Tempita Vihara, Mahawehera, Matale District, Central Province
25. Navaratnagoda PuranaVihara, Udatenna, Matale District, Central Province
26. Dambulla Raja MahaVihara, Dambulla, Matale District, Central Province
27. Kitulpe Raja MahaVihara, Pallebowala, Nuwara-Eliya District, Central Province
28. Arattana Raja MahaVihara, Maddepola, Nuwara-Eliya District, Central Province
29. Potgul Maliga MahaVihara, Hanguranketa, Nuwara-Eliya District, Central Province
30. Madanwala Raja MahaVihara, Nuwara-Eliya District, Central Province
31. Bodhimalkada Purana Vihara, Padiyapalella, Nuwara-Eliya District, Central Province
32. Ambulugala Dantapaya Tempita Vihara, Mavanella, Kegalle District, Sabaragamuwa Province
33. Muwapitiya Tempita Vihara, Rambukkana, Kegalle District , Sabaragamuwa Province
34. Bambaragala Raja MahaVihara, Vaduwawa, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province

35. Sri Vijayasundaramaya, Dambadeniya, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
36. Bihalpola Tempita Vihara, Narammala, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
37. Edanduwawa Tempita Vihara, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
38. RidiVihara, Ridigama, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
39. Sanveli Raja Maha VIhara, Ganegoda, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
40. Kaballelena Rja Maha Vihara, Dagama, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
41. Kandegama Raja Maha Vihara, Vellava, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
42. Mediriya Purana Vihara, Kandulawa, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
43. PeriyakadunelawaPuranaVihara, Nalava, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
44. Madahpola Tempita Vihara, Malsiripura, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
45. Kasagala Raja Maha Vihara, Kumbukgete, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
46. Padeniya Raja Maha Vihara, Padeniya, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
47. Kaballelena Rja Maha Vihara, Wariyapola, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
48. Nagolla Raja Maha Vihara, Polpitigama, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
49. Niyandawane Raja Maha Vihara, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
50. Yapahuwa Raja MahaVihara,Yapahuwa, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
51. Hathigamuwa Purana Vihara, Gurugoda, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
52. Ganekanda Purana Vihara, Amunukole, Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
53. Sasseruwa Raja MahaVihara, Sasseruwa,Kurunegala District, North-Western Province
54. Dowa Raja Maha Vihara, Badulla District, Uva Province
55. Valalgoda Raja Maha Vihara, Panamure, Ratnapura District, Sabaragamuwa Province
56. Varana Raja MahaVihara, Kalagedihena, Gampaha District, Western Province
57. Pilikuttuwa Raja Maha Vihara, Pilikuttuwa, Gamapaha District, Western Province
58. Uttamarama Purana Vihara, Udammita, Gampaha District, Western Province
59. Sapugaskanda Vihara, Makola, Gampaha District, Western Province
60. Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihara, Kelaniya, Gampaha District, Western Province
61. Kotte Raja Maha Vihara, Kotte, Colombo District, Western Province

62. Subodarama Purana Vihara, Karagampitiya, Colombo District, Western Province
63. Pokunuvita Raja MahaVihara, Kalutara District, Western Province
64. Pulinatalaramaya, Kalutara North, Kalutara District, Western Province
65. DuwaVihara, Kalurara South, Kalutara District, Western Province
66. Sumanaramaya, Payagala South, Kalutara District, Western Province
67. Sri Sudarmaramaya, Maha Bellana, Kalutara District, Western Province
68. Ganegodella Purana Vihara, Kosgoda, Galle District, Southern Province
69. Kshestraramaya, Ahungalla, Galle District, Southern Province
70. Vijayamaya, Ahungalla, Galle District, Southern Province
71. Subadrarama Purana Vihara, Balapitiya, Galle District, Southern Province
72. Rahularamaya, Balapitiya, Galle District, Southern Province
73. Sangaraja Maha Vihara, Randombe, Galle District, Southern Province
74. Sunandarama Purana Vihara, Ambalagoda, Galle District, Southern Province
75. Telwatta Raja Maha Vihara (old), Galle District, Southern Province
76. Telwatta Raja Maha Vihara, Galle District, Southern Province
77. Subadrarmaya, Totgmuwa, Glle District, Southern Province
78. Jananandaramaya, Hikkaduwa, Galle District, Southern Province
79. Kumara MahaVihara, Dodanduwa, Galle District, Southern Province
80. Sailabimbarama PuranaVihara, Dodanduwa, Galle District, Southern Province
81. Sudarshana Rama Viharaya, Galmangoda, Galle District, Southern Province
82. Tunmahal Vihara, Gimtota, Galle district, Southern Province
83. Vilgamu Raja MahaVihara, Mabotuwana, Galle District, Southern Province
84. Sudarshanarama Purana Vihara, Karapitiya, Galle District, Southern Province
85. Gangarama MahaVihara, Magalla, Galle District, Southern Province
86. Ariykr Vihara, Miripnna, Galle District, Southern Province
87. Dewagiri Raja MahaVihara, Galle District, Southern Province
88. Ranvella Purana Vihara, Kataluwa, Galle District, Southern Province
89. Purvarama Purana Vihara, Kataluwa, Galle District, Southern Province
90. Sudarshanarama Purana Vihara, Velihinda, Matara District, Southern Province
91. Gangarama Purana Vihara, Polwatta, Matara District, Southern Province
92. Samudragiri Purana Vihara, Mirissa, Matara District, Southern Province
93. Jetavana Raja Maha Vihara, Godapitiya, Matara District, Southern Province
94. Sudarshanarama Purana Vihara, Godapitiya, Matara District, Southern Province
95. Algiriya Vihara, Algiriya, Matara District, Southern Province
96. Kamburupitiya Raja Maha Vihara, Matara District, Southern Province
97. Tunbodhi Raja Maha Vihara, Yatiyana, Matara District, Southern Province
98. Mulkirigala Raja MahaVihara, Hambantota District, Southern Province
99. Rekawa Raja Maha Vihara, Rekawa, Hambantota District, Southern Province
100. Hatagala Raja MahaVihara, Hatagala, Hambantota District, Southern Province

Appendix 3: Pro-Forma Field Survey Sheet

Dulma Karunarathna - Field Survey **Data entry Sheet**	
Name of the site:	
Location:	
Year of construction/ renovation/conservation:	
Historical background:	
Patronage:	
Women as scared representation:	
Artist/ families of art representations:	
Contribution of women towards creations:	
Services rendered by women	
Contributions of women towards special crafts:	
Nature of the society:	
Previous recordings/ studies/research / publications:	
Similarities with other places (Architecture, painting, carvings, sculpture):	

Stories/ beliefs/ myths/customs/ traditions of women:	
Outstanding females in regional/area history:	
Nature of Depiction of women in art:	

Appendix 4: Pro-Forma Museum Survey Sheet

Dulma Karunarathna - Museum Survey **Data entry Sheet**	
Name of the object:	
Registration number:	
Location & Context:	
Museum/ Gallery:	
Description provided by the museum: Name of the	
Medium:	
previous recordings/ studies/research / publications:	
Nature of Depiction of women in art:	

Appendix 5: Victoria *Aṭṭhaka*

1. rājiddhiyā vilasitā jagadamhimasmiṃ
   sacumbi taggacaraṇā paṭhvissarehi
   victoriyā itisutā jagatī patānī
   sambhātu sambhu ramaṇīva ciraṃ patītā

2. setambudoḷupati kundamarinda dantī
   saṃkāsakitti visarā sirisā jalantī
   victoriyā yadi sampatinī patītā
   saṃjīvataṃ satasamaṃ vahatī tikāva

3. lokamhi saṭṭhi saradaṃ patimamhi rajjaṃ
   ubbissare abhibhavitvā suvaṃ karontī
   victoriyāti viditā dharaṇī patānī
   maccuṃkharaṃ vijayataṃ satamatta vassaṃ

4. eṃgalanta desa pabhutī visayesu rajjaṃ
   pattāmitāmalaguṇā siriyā nivāsā
   victoriyakhya dharaṇī patinī sadeva
   jetaṃ kharāhitagaṇe panimamhi loke

5. sampatti rāsi jalitāmita rāja iddhī
   tejassinī pasupatī ramaṇīvahantī
   victoriyādhivacanā vararājinīsā
   sammā vibhātu satavassamarījayantī

6. setambudāvali'ti bhāsita kittiyassā
   setīkarontihagatā nikhilā disāyo
   paccāgamitva nijadesasikaṃ akāsi
   victoriyā kupatinī jalataṃ sadāso

7. lokamhi sabba naradeva padhānabhūtā
   sampattiyāmitaguṇena ca bhāsamānā
   victoriyā naraptāni kharāhi tose
   jetvāna jīvatu ciraṃva saputtajātā

8. paññāya puṇṇahadayā sadayā janesu
   mettā khamādi sadanā vadanindu tulyā
   victoriyāti viditā dharaṇissarīsā
   sammā virājatu umāviya dīghakālaṃ

Tables

Table 1: The Number of Times Each *Jataka* story is Depicted in Murals

Name of the story	Number of depictions
(DDJ) *Dēvadhamma Jātaka*	5
(KTJ) *Kaṭṭhahāri Jātaka*	1
(KDJ) *Khadiranga Jātaka*	2
(MSJ) *Mahā-sīlava Jātaka*	2
(AMJ) *Asātamanta Jātaka*	1
(ABJ) *Andhabhūta Jātaka*	1
(SNRJ) *Silavanāgarāja Jātaka*	1
(SCJ) *Saccamkira Jātaka*	1
(TJ) *Tēlapatta Jātaka*	10
(CPJ) *Culla-paduma Jātaka*	1
(MCJ) *Manicōra Jātaka*	3
(MJ) *Mandātu Jātaka*	1
(MPJ) *Mahā-panāda Jātaka*	1
(KDJ) *Kuru-Dharma Jātaka*	1
(KVJ) *Khantivādi Jātaka*	6
(LJ) *Lōhakumbhi Jātaka*	1
(SSJ) *Sasa Jātaka*	5
(UJ) *Uraga Jātaka*	1
(CDL) *Culla-dammapāla Jātaka*	20
(SKJ) *Svaṇṇakakkata Jātaka*	2
(SBJ) *Sattubhatta Jātaka*	1
(MDJ) *Mahā-dammapāla Jātaka*	1
(MKJ) *Mahā-kanha Jātaka*	1
(SVJ) *Sivi Jātaka*	4
(HJ) *Hatthipāla Jātaka*	1
(SNJ) *Sōna-Nanda Jātaka*	1
(MSTJ) *Mahā-sutasōma Jātaka*	2

Name of the story	**Number of depictions**
(MPKJ) *Muga-pakkha Jātaka*	2
(MJJ) *Mahājanaka Jātaka*	1
(SAJ) *Sāma Jātaka*	3
(NJ) *Nimi Jātaka*	1
(KHJ) *Khandahāla Jātaka*	2
(VPJ) *Vidurapaṇḍita Jātaka*	1
(MUJ) *Mahā-ummagga Jātaka*	4
(VJ) *Vessantara Jātaka*	33
(DJ) *Dahamsonda Jātaka*	12

Table 2: List of Temple Murals, by Date Painted

Name of the Temple	Middle 18th C	Late 18th C	Early 19th C	Middle 19th C	Late 19th C	Early 20th C
Sri Dalada Maligawa	*					
Asgiri Gedige RMV				*		
Nagavimana PV			*			
Degaldoruwa RMV		*				
Sirimalwatta RMV			*			
Gangarama RMV		*				
Talawa RMV		*				
Ilupandeniya RMV			*			
Telambugala RMV					*	
Niyamgampaya RMV		*				
Unambuwa TV					*	
Hindagala RMV			*			
Suriyagoda RMV		*				
Gadaladeniya RMV		*				
Veligodapola TV			*			
Medawala TV	*					
Vagolla P V						*
Garakmedilla RMV						*
Velikotuwa PV					*	
Katudeniya PV					*	
Pamunuwa PV		*				
Bodimalu PV		*				
Sulunapahura RMV		*				
Dembava TV	*					
Navaratnagoda PV			*			

Name of the Temple	Middle 18th C	Late 18th C	Early 19th C	Middle 19th C	Late 19th C	Early 20th C
Dambulla RMV		*				
Kitulpe RMV						*
Arattana RMV		*				
Potgul Maliga MV			*			
Madanwala RMV		*				
Bodhimalkada PV					*	
Ambulugala Dantapaya TV		*				
Muwapitiya TV			*			
Bambaragala RMV				*		
Vijayasundararama RMV		*				
Bihalpola TV			*			
Edanduwawa TV			*			
Ridi Vihara		*				
Sanveli RMV			*			
Kaballelena RMV, Dagama					*	
Kandegama RMV			*			
Mediriya PV					*	
Periyakadunelawa PV						*
Madahapola TV			*			
Kasagala RMV				*		
Padeniya RMV		*				
Kaballelena RMV, Vellegala		*				
Nagolla RMV					*	
Niyandawane RMV						*
Yapahuwa RMV						

Name of the Temple	**Middle 18th C**	**Late 18th C**	**Early 19th C**	**Middle 19th C**	**Late 19th C**	**Early 20th C**
Hathigamuwa PV					*	
Ganekanda PV		*				
Sasseruwa RMV		*				
Dowa RMV			*			
Valalgoda RMV			*			
Varana RMV			*			
Pilikuttuwa RMV					*	
Uttamarama PV					*	
Sapugaskanda V				*		
Kelaniya RMV					*	
Kotte RMV					*	
Subodharama RMV					*	
Pokunuvita RMV			*			
Pulinatalaramaya				*		
DuwaVihara			*			
Sumanaramaya			*			
Sri Sudarmaramaya				*		
Ganegodella PV		*				
Kshestraramaya					*	
Vijayaramaya					*	
Subadrarama PV					*	
Rahularamaya					*	
Sangaraja MV					*	
Sunandarama PV			*			
Telwatta RMV (old)		*				

Name of the Temple	**Middle 18th C**	**Late 18th C**	**Early 19th C**	**Middle 19th C**	**Late 19th C**	**Early 20th C**
Telwatta RMV			*			
Subadraramaya					*	
Jananandaramaya			*			
Kumara MV					*	
Sailabimbarama PV					*	
Sudarshanarama V					*	
Tunmahal V			*			
Vilgamu RMV				*		
Sudarshanarama PV, Karapitiya					*	
Gangarama MV					*	
Ariykara V					*	
Dewagiri RMV					*	
Ranvella PV				*		
Purvarama PV					*	
Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda					*	
Gangarama PV					*	
Samudragiri PV					*	
Jetavana RMV				*		
Sudarshanarama PV, Godapitiya					*	
Algiriya V			*			
Kamburupitiya RMV					*	
Tunbodhi RMV					*	
Mulkirigala RMV					*	
Rekawa RMV					*	

Name of the Temple	**Middle 18th C**	**Late 18th C**	**Early 19th C**	**Middle 19th C**	**Late 19th C**	**Early 20th C**
Hatagala RMV		*				
Total	3	21	24	10	36	5

Table 3: List of Temples in Up-Country and Low-Country

Up country	Low country
Sri Dalada Maligawa	Varana RMV
Asgiri Gedige RMV	Pilikuttuwa RMV
Nagavimana PV	Uttamarama PV
Degaldoruwa RMV	Sapugaskanda V
Sirimalwatta RMV	Kelaniya RMV
Gangarama RMV	Kotte RMV
Talawa RMV	Subodharama RMV
Ilupandeniya RMV	Pokunuvita RMV
Telambugala RMV	Pulinatalaramaya
Niyamgampaya RMV	DuwaVihara
Unambuwa TV	Sumanaramaya
Hindagala RMV	Sri Sudarmaramaya
Suriyagoda RMV	Ganegodella PV
Gadaladeniya RMV	Kshestraramaya
Veligodapola TV	Vijayaramaya
Medawala TV	Subadrarama PV
Vagolla P V	Rahularamaya
Garakmedilla RMV	Sangaraja MV
Velikotuwa PV	Sunandarama PV
Katudeniya PV	Telwatta RMV (old)
Pamunuwa PV	Telwatta RMV
Bodimalu PV	Subadraramaya
Sulunapahura RMV	Jananandaramaya
Dembava TV	Kumara MV
Navaratnagoda PV	Sailabimbarama PV

Dambulla RMV	Sudarshanarama V
Kitulpe RMV	Tunmahal V
Arattana RMV	Vilgamu RMV
Potgul Maliga MV	Sudarshanarama PV, Karapitiya
Madanwala RMV	Gangarama MV
Bodhimalkada PV	Ariyakara V
Ambulugala Dantapaya TV	Dewagiri RMV
Muwapitiya TV	Ranvella PV
Bambaragala RMV	Purvarama PV
Vijayasundararama RMV	Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda
Bihalpola TV	Gangarama PV
Edanduwawa TV	Samudragiri PV
Ridi Vihara	Jetavana RMV
Sanveli RMV	Sudarshanarama PV, Godapitiya
Kaballelena RMV, Dagama	Algiriya V
Kandegama RMV	Kamburupitiya RMV
Mediriya PV	Tunbodhi RMV
Periyakadunelawa PV	Mulkirigala RMV
Madahpola TV	Rekawa RMV
Kasagala RMV	Hatagala RMV
Padeniya RMV	
Kaballelena RMV, Vellegala	
Nagolla RMV	
Niyandawane RMV	
Yapahuwa RMV	
Hathigamuwa PV	
Ganekanda PV	

Sasseruwa RMV	
Dowa RMV	
Valalgoda RMV	
Sri Dalada Maligawa	
Asgiri Gedige RMV	
Nagavimana PV	
Degaldoruwa RMV	
Sirimalwatta RMV	
Gangarama RMV	
Talawa RMV	
Ilupandeniya RMV	

Table 4: The Religious Patronage of Women as Recorded by Lawrie (1898)

Donor	Name of the Temple	Nature of the Donation	Lawrie 1898, page
A royal mother	Asgiri temple	Lands	75
Queen Udumale of king Kirti Sri	Name not mentioned	Lands	82
A women in Delmada	Name not mentioned	Land	154
A woman	Bowatta temple	Lands	218
Kumarihami (aristocratic lady)	Galgana temple	Lands	181
Henakanda Biso Bandara	Hindahala temple	Lands	350-1
Henakanda Biso Bandara	Handessa temple	Lands	319
Hiralugala Menik Etana	Hendeniya temple	Land	340
Agunawala Mahatmayo	Kamburadeniya temple	lands	48-9
Kondadeniye Mahatmayo	Name not mentioned	lands	464
A woman	Name not mentioned	lands	479
Kumarihami (aristocratic lady)	Name not mentioned	lands	569
A woman	Name not mentioned	Land and a paddy field	587
A woman	Molagoda temple	lands	603
A woman	Name not mentioned	lands	609
Kiri Mahattayo (a shared donation)	Name not mentioned	lands	670
Tikirimenika	Name not mentioned	Paddy field	671
A woman	Name not mentioned	Renovated the temple	491
A woman	Name not mentioned	Renovated the temple	929

Table 5: List of Patrons of Murals at the Second Image House in Garakmedilla RMV

Name of the Patron	Sex	Social status	Name of the painting
Ranavana Valauwe Ran Menika	Female	Aristocratic	Deepankara Buddha
Ranavana Valauwe Dingiri Amma	Female	Aristocratic	Kondanna Buddha
Ranavana Valauwe Tikiri Kumarihami	Female	Aristocratic	Mangala Buddha
Punchi Kumarihami	Female	Aristocratic	Sumana Buddha
Tikiri Kumarihami	Female	Aristocratic	Revata Buddha
Punchi Kumarihami	Female	Aristocratic	Sobhita Buddha
Ran Manika	Female	Aristocratic / Upper middle	Anomadassi Buddha
Varigadehetti Mudiyanselage Loku Manika	Female	Upper middle	Paduma Buddha
Weerakoon Mudiyansele Pallewatte Gedara Dingiri Amma	Female	Upper middle	Narada Buddha
Varigadehetti Mudiyanselage Ran Manika	Female	Upper middle	Padumuttara Buddha
Kahandamanse Gedara Ran Menika	Female	Lower middle	Sumeda Buddha
Makuloluwe Valauwe Tikiri Kumarihami	Female	Aristocratic	Sujata Buddha
Nagolle Kahandamanse Gedara Dingiri Amma	Female	Lower middle	Piyadassi Buddha
Varigadehetti Mudiyanselage Dingiri Amma	Female	Upper middle	Attadassi Buddha
Weerakoon Mudiyansele Punchi Manika	Female	Upper middle	Dammadassi Buddha
Harasgama Valauwe Bandara Manika	Female	Aristocratic	Siddhatta Buddha
Udunuwara Ganhate Pahala Valauwe Kalu Bandara Mahatmaya	Male	Aristocratic	Tissa Buddha
Ranavana Heart Wasala Mudiyansele Valuwe Biso Manika	Female	Aristocratic	Phussa Buddha
Weerasinha Araccige Avariala Upasaka Amma	Female	Upper middle	Vipassi Buddha
Kammale Padinchi Arambawatte Kiri Manika	Female	Lower rank	Sikhi Buddha
Alawatugoda Mallikageda Kirihami	Female	Lower rank	Vessabhu Buddha

Name of the Patron	**Sex**	**Social status**	**Name of the painting**
Varigadehetti Mudiyanselage Gedara Ukku Manika	Female	Upper middle	Kakusanda Buddha
Asweddume Wickramasinghe Mudiyansele Palle Kumbure Dingiri Amma	Female	Upper middle	Konagama Buddha
Ratnak Gedara Ukku Manika	Female	Lower rank	Kassapa Buddha
Henayale Gedara Kuda Ridi	Female	Lower rank	First week of *Sat sati*[5]
Dehi Dodankara Gedara Setu	Male	Lower rank	Second week of *Sat sati*
Duwala Gedara Setu	Male	Lower rank	Third week of *Sat sati*
Dombagammana Punchi	Female	Lower rank	Fourth week of *Sat sati*
Henayale Ran Kiri	Female	Lower rank	Fifth week of *Sat sati*
Anonymous	-	-	Sixth week of *Sat sati*
Anonymous	-	-	Seventh week of *Sat sati*

[5] *Sat sati* are the seven weeks spent by Buddha after his enlightenment

Table 6: The Breastfeeding Positions of Mothers

Name of the temple	Seated	Stood	Laying down	Walking
Arattana RMV Scene I	*			
Arattana RMV Scene II	*			
Bihalpola TV	*			
Degaldoruwa RMV Scene I	*			
Degaldoruwa RMV Scene II	*			
Degaldoruwa RMV Scene III	*			
Degaldoruwa RMV Scene IV	*			
Gangarama PV Scene I	*			
Gangarama PV Scene II	*			
Gangarama PV Scene III	*			
Ganekanda PV Scene I	*			
Ganekanda PV Scene II	*			
Ganekanda PV Scene III	*			
Ganegodalla PV	*			
Hindagala RMV	*		*	
Kelaniya RMV	*			
Nagavimana PV	*			
Niyandawane RMV	*	*		
Periyakadunelawa PV				*
Potgul RMV	*			
Purvarama PV Scene I	*			
Purvarama PV Scene II	*			
Sailabimbarama PV	*			
Sangaraja PV	*			
Sunandarama PV	*			
Talawa RMV	*			
Telwatta RMV Scene I	*		*	
Telwatta RMV Scene II	*			
Varana RMV	*			
Velikotuwa PV	*			
Veligodapola TV Scene I	*			
Veligodapola TV Scene I	*			

Table 7: The Depiction of Family Members in Child-Rearing

Name of the temple	Mother	Father	Both Parents	Grand parents
Arattana RMV	*		*	
Bambaragala RMV	*	*	*	
Bihalpola TV	*	*		
Bodhimalkada PV	*			
Dambadeniya RMV			*	
Degaldoruwa RMV			*	
Dova RMV	*	*		
Gangarama PV	*			
Ganekanda PV	*		*	
Hathigamuwa PV	*			
Hindagala RMV	*		*	
Kaballelena RMV-D			*	*
Kelaniya RMV	*		*	
Kotte RMV	*	*	*	
Kumara MV	*	*	*	
Medawala TV				*
Nagavimana PV	*	*	*	
Navaratnagoda PV	*			
Periyakadunelawa PV	*			
Pilikuttuwa RMV	*			
Potgul RMV	*		*	
Purvarama PV	*	*	*	*
Ranvella PV	*	*		
Sailabimbarama PV	*	*		
Samudragiri PV	*	*	*	
Sangaraja PV	*			
Sudarshanarama PV-D	*	*		
Sunandarama PV	*	*	*	*
Talawa RMV	*	*	*	
Telwatta RMV	*	*	*	
Tunmahal V	*	*		
Uttamarama PV	*	*		
Velikotuwa PV	*			
Veligodapola TV	*		*	
Vilgamu RMV	*	*		
Yapahuwa RMV			*	

Table 8: Services at the Royal Palace and Whether Carried out by Men (M) or Women (W) or Both (MW)

Temple Name	*Chamara*	*Sesat*	*Avan*	*Vatapat*	*Pankah*	*Charta*	*Talatta*	*Hella*	*Dwaja*	*Uliyakkara*	palanquin
Arattana RMV								M			
Asgiri Gedige RMV	W		W	W	M						
Bambaragala RMV		W M									
Dambadeniya RMV		M						M	M		
Dembawa TV		M							M	M	W
Dambulla RMV		M				M	M	M			
Degaldoruwa RMV		M				M	M		M		
Gangarama PV		M									
Gangarama RMV		M				M					
Hindagala RMV		M				M		M			
Kaballelena RMV-W		M									
Karagampitiya RMV	M	M						M	M	M	W
Kataluwa PV											
Kelaniya RMV		M	W					M	M		
Kotte RMV						M		M	M		
Kumara PV			W			W					
Mulkirigala RMV		M				M	M	M			
Niyandawane RMV									M	M	
Pilikuttuwa RMV		M							M		
Potgul RMV		M									
Purvarama PV	M W	M		W		M W	M		M	M	W
Ranvella PV	W	M W	W			M W	M		M	M	
Sailabimbarama PV	M W	M	W	W		M W	M	M	M	M	
Samudragiri PV	W	M	W			M W			M	M	
Sudarshanarama PV-D	W	M	W	W					M	M	W

Temple Name	*Chamara*	*Sesat*	*Avan*	*Vatapat*	*Pankah*	*Charta*	*Talatta*	*Hella*	*Dwaja*	*Uliyakkara*	palanquin
Sudarshanarama PV-G				W						M	
Sudarshanrama PV -K		M	W	W					M	M	W
Sunandarama PV	M	M				M		M	M		
Subadrarama PV						M					
Sudarshanarama PV, Godapitiya											
Suriyagoda RMV										M	
Talawa RMV		M				M	M		M		
Telwatta RMV		M				M W		M	M		
Tunmahal PV		M	W	W		M	M	M		M	
Uttamarama PV		M						M	M		
Vagolla PV	W			W							
Valalgoda RMV						M			M	M	W
Velikotuwa PV			W	W	M	M					

Table 9: The Tasks in the Royal Kitchen and Whether Carried Out by Men (M) or Women (W)

Temple Name	Water fetching		Scraping Coconut		Cooking		Lighting fires		Applying ingredients		Grinding		Serving Food	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
Bodhimalkada PV													*	
Dembawa TV													*	
Hindagala RMV	*												*	
Karagampitiya RMV			*		*								*	*
Kelanaiya RMV			*								*			
Kotte RMV			*		*		*				*		*	
Kumara MV						*							*	
Pilikuttuwa RMV			*		*								*	
Purvarama PV						*							*	*
Sangaraja PV					*								*	
Samudragiri PV						*								*
Sunandarama PV	*		*		*		*		*					*
Talawa RMV													*	
Telwatta RMV			*		*	*							*	*
Velihinda PV													*	
Uttamarama PV			*		*									*
Veligodapola TV					*		*						*	

Table 10: Literacy of Men and Women in Different Regions of the Central Province in 1881 and 1891

Name of Area	Year Recorded	Men Able to Read	Women Able to Read	Men Unable to Read	Women Unable to Read
UdaBulatgama, Nuwaraeliya district	1891	7270	565	34907	28411
	1881	6048	446	26913	19780
Matale East, Matale district	1891	2471	90	8021	8402
	1881	1849	37	9696	8692
Matale North, Matale district	1891	3231	58	7839	16809
	1881	2009	58	8492	20478
Matale south, Matale district	1891	4698	241	14786	16809
	1881	5400	428	21253	20478
Matale, Matale district	1891	12080	768	29276	34387
	1881	9258	523	39212	37662
Udapalata, Kandy district	1891	4655	476	15666	15664
	1881	4144	381	15357	14506
Tumpane, Kandy district	1891	1691	87	4573	5684
	1881	1676	73	4866	5855
Udunuwara, Kandy district	1891	2468	119	354	6336
	1881	2600	108	4853	6693
Yatinuwara, Kandy district	1891	2681	320	6256	8083
	1881	2357	187	7271	8133
Harispattuwa, Kandy District	1891	4279	192	10916	15157
	1881	4867	198	13702	16800
Lower Dumbara, Kandy District	1891	6009	366	17594	20271
	1881	6123	402	21184	21482

Table 11 Representations of Bridal Couple at the Marriage Ceremony (B = Bride, BG = Bridegroom)

Name of the temple	Left side	Right Side
Dambawa TV	BG	B
Gangarama PV	BG	B
Gangarama RMV	B	BG
Karagampitiya RMV scene I	B	BG
Karagampitiya RMV scene II	B	BG
Kelaniya RMV	B	BG
Kumara MV scene I	BG	B
Kumara MV scene I	BG	B
Purvarama PV scene I	BG	B
Purvarama PV scene II	BG	B
Purvarama PV I scene II	BG	B
Purvarama PV scene IV	BG	B
Purvarama PV scene V	BG	B
Ranvella PV scene I	BG	B
Ranvella PV scene II	B	BG
Ranvella PV scene III	B	BG
Sailabimbarama PV scene I	B	BG
Sailabimbarama PV scene II	BG	B
Sailabimbarama PV scene III	BG	B
Samudragiri PV scene I	BG	B
Samudragiri PV scene II	BG	B
Subadrarama PV scene I	B	BG
Subadrarama PV scene II	BG	B
Sudarshanarama PV-K scene I	BG	B
Sudarshanarama PV-K scene II	B	BG
Sudarshanarama PV- scene D	BG	B
Telwatta RMV	BG	B
Uttamarama PV	BG	B
Vagolla PV	BG	B
total	B-10, BG-20	B-20, BG-10

Table 12: The use of Hand for Pouring Water at the Marriage Ceremony (B = Bride, BG = Bridegroom)

Hands used for watering	**Number of scenes**
Right hand of the B and right hand of the BG	08
left hand of the B and right hand of the BG	6
Right hand of the B and left hand of the BG	6
Both hand of the B and BG	4
Left hand of the B and left hand of the BG	2
Left hand of the B and both hands of the BG	1

Table 13: Representations of Attendance at the Marriage Ceremony

Name of the temple	Father of Bride	Father of Bridegroom	Mother of Bride	Mother of Bridegroom
Dambawa TV	*		*	
Gangarama PV	*			
Gangarama RMV	*	*	*	*
Karagampitiya RMV scene I		*		
Karagampitiya RMV scene I	*			
Kelaniya RMV	*		*	
Kumara MV scene I	*			
Kumara MV scene I	*			
Purvarama PV scene I	*	*		
Purvarama PV scene II	*			
Purvarama PV I scene II	*			
Purvarama PV scene IV	*			
Purvarama PV scene V	*		*	
Ranvella PV scene I	*		*	
Ranvella PV scene II	*			
Ranvella PV scene III	*	*		
Sailabimbarama PV scene I	*	*		
Sailabimbarama PV scene II	*			
Sailabimbarama PV scene III	*			
Samudragiri PV scene I	*	*		
Samudragiri PV scene II	*			
Subadrarama PV scene I	*			
Subadrarama PV scene II	*	*		
Sudarshanarama PV-K scene I	*	*		
Sudarshanarama PV-K scene II	*	*		
Sudarshanarama PV- scene D	*	*		
Telwatta RMV	*			
Uttamarama PV	*			
Vagolla PV	*	*	*	*

Table 14: Dress and Ornamentation of the Bride

Garments	Number of scenes
Uncover the upper body	16
A shawl covering from head	15
Cloth for the lower body	13
Long skirt	5
Long sleeve maxi gown	5
Flower decorations of the head	5
Veil	3
Shawls	3
Fan	3
Short sleeved gown	2
Short sleeved jacket	2
Crown	1
Cross as a pendent	1

Table 15: The Position of Weeping for Men (M) and Women (W)

Name of temple	Seating	Standing	Laying down
Asgiri Gedige RMV		W	
Dambadeniya RMV	W		
Degaldoruwa RMV	W		
Dowa RMV	W	W	W
Hindagala	W	W M	
Ganegodalla PV		W	
Ganekanda PV	W		
Kumara MV	M	M W	
Medawala TV	W		
Niyandawane RMV		W	
Pilikuttuwa RMV		W	
Potgul RMV	W	W	
Purvarama PV	W	W	
Ranvella PV		W M	
Samudragiri PV	M W	W	
Subadrarama PV		W	
Sudarshanarama PV-K		M	M
Sunandarama PV	W M	W	
Vilgamu TV		W	
Telwatta RMV	W	M	W
Tunmahal PV	W	W	
Uttamarama PV	M		
Vagolla PV	M W	W	
Velikotuwa PV	MW	W	
Veligodapola TV		W	

Table 16: The Hand Gestures of Weeping for Men (M) and Women (W)

Name of temple	One hand on chest	Both hands on chest	One hand on cheek	Both hands on cheek	One hand on forehead	Both hands on forehead	One hand on head	Both hands on head	One hand on cheek one on head	One hand on chest other on head	Raised joined hand above head
Asgiri Gedige RMV				W							
Dambadeniya RMV			W								
Degaldoruwa RMV	W				W						
Dowa RMV							W				
Hindagala	W M	W									
Ganegodalla PV							W				
Ganekanda PV						W					
Kumara MV							M W				
Medawala TV					W						
Niyandawane RMV										W	W
Pilikuttuwa RMV							W				
Potgul RMV			W		W	W	W				
Purvarama PV			M	W			W	W	W		
Ranvella PV							W M	W			
Samudragiri PV			M	M	M		W		W M		
Subadrarama PV							W				
Sudarshanarama PV-K								M			
Sunandarama PV			W M								
Vilgamu TV							W				
Telwatta RMV		W	M				W	W	W		
Tunmahal PV			W				W				
Uttamarama PV							M				
Vagolla PV			M W	W			W				
Velikotuwa PV	W		M W				W		W		
Veligodapola TV			W				W				

Table 17: Timeline Evidencing Major Changes in Image Content Through Time and Two Regions

	Up-Country						Low-Country					
	Middle 18th C	Late 18th C	Early 19th C	Middle 19th C	Late 19th C	Early 20th C	Middle 18th C	Late 18th C	Early 19th C	Middle 19th C	Late 19th C	Early 20th C
Architectural tradition of the image house; *Len Vihāra*		*	*	*	*	*		*				
Architectural tradition of the image house; *Tempita Vihāra*	*	*	*	*	*	*						
Architectural tradition of the image house; *Laage Prāsāda Vihāra*									*		*	*
Architectural tradition of the image house; *Small Prāsāda Vihāra*					*	*				*		
Numerous *Jātaka* stories					*				*		*	
Concept of hell and heaven					*	*					*	
Increasing the numbers of hells											*	
Figure of Lakshmi, composite female figures or *Nāri-lata* at the entrance	*	*	*	*				*	*		*	
Queen Victoria at the entrance						*					*	
Religious prestige was corroborated by receiving veneration from the women		*	*		*	*					*	*
Mandri as a female hermit		*	*	*		*						
Religious status of female servants was inferior											*	
Female patrons						*				*	*	
The participation of women in income-generating activities	*			*								
Women work in shops									*	*		
Women dressed in European gowns						*				*	*	*
Upper-class women dressed in South Indian Garments and Jewelry		*		*								
Usage of printed materials for garments			*		*					*	*	*
The upper garment of elite men and women was a jacket with a *manta*, or frilled collar	*	*	*	*								
Bride wares a crown at the wedding						*				*	*	*
Women hold fans in their hands						*				*	*	*
Women in footwear			*								*	*
European musical instruments and dancers											*	
Female Dancers in the processions									*	*	*	*
Women had an equal power in decision-making at the household level		*				*					*	
Participation of the Queen in decision-making			*	*					*	*	*	
The story of *Ummagga Jātaka* which tells the female intelligent											*	
Jujaka lying down or kneeling at the feet of the wife with the gesture of folded			*	*	*			*	*			
Amitatapa beats her husband in *Vessantara Jātaka*			*	*	*			*	*			
Assistance provided by the husband in the preparation of family meals											*	*
Men in cleaning					*					*	*	*
Bride was purified before marriage	*					*						
Sailboats for travelling			*							*	*	
Both the men and women use the same hand and unbind their hair, which is a powerful way of expressing sorrow										*	*	

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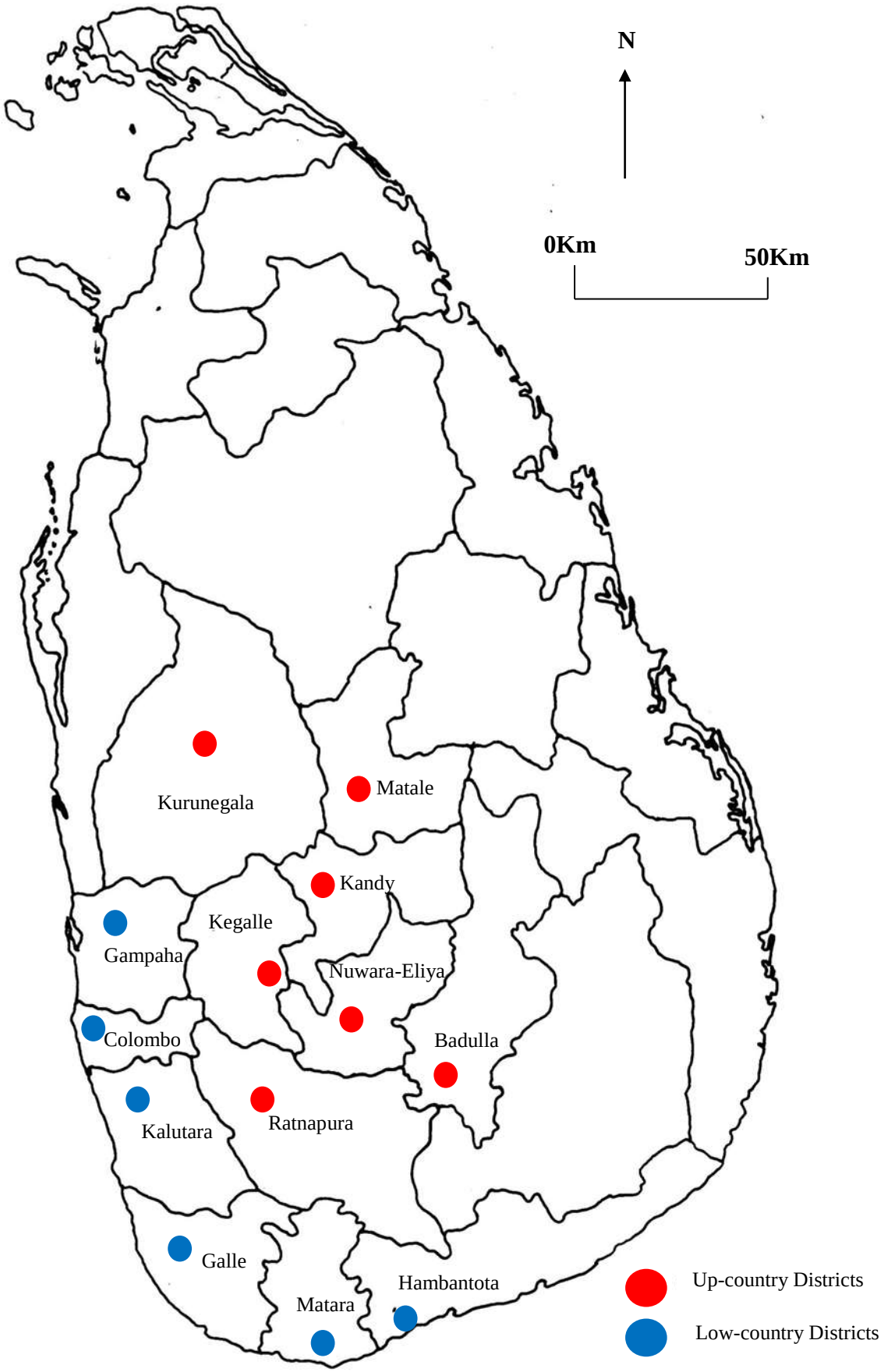
Figures

Figure 1 Spatial frame of the Study: the Location of Up-Country and Low-Country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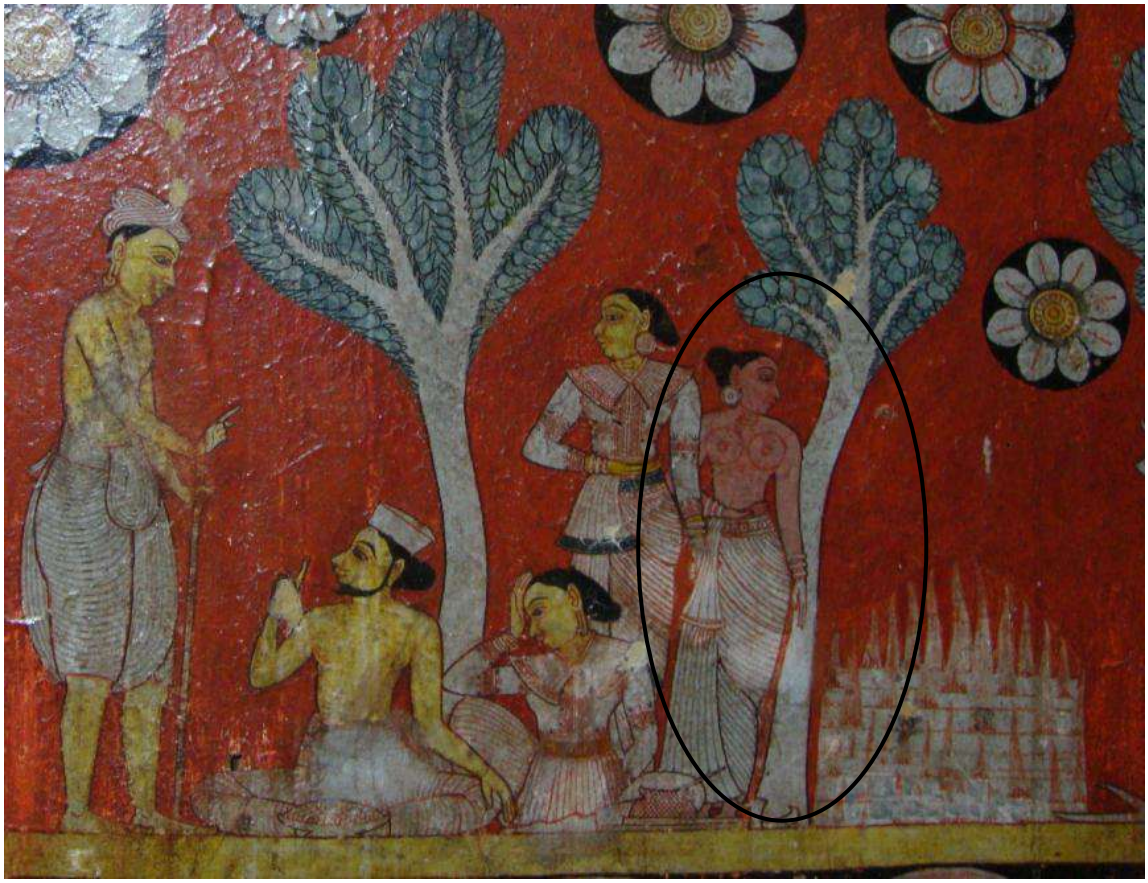
Up-country Districts
Low-country Districts

Figure 2 Misinterpretation of Holt (1996) on *Uraga Jātaka*

2a Family lunch and cremation, female servant (circled) *Uraga Jatāka*, Medawala TV, middle eighteenth century

2b plate no: 25 of Holt (1996)



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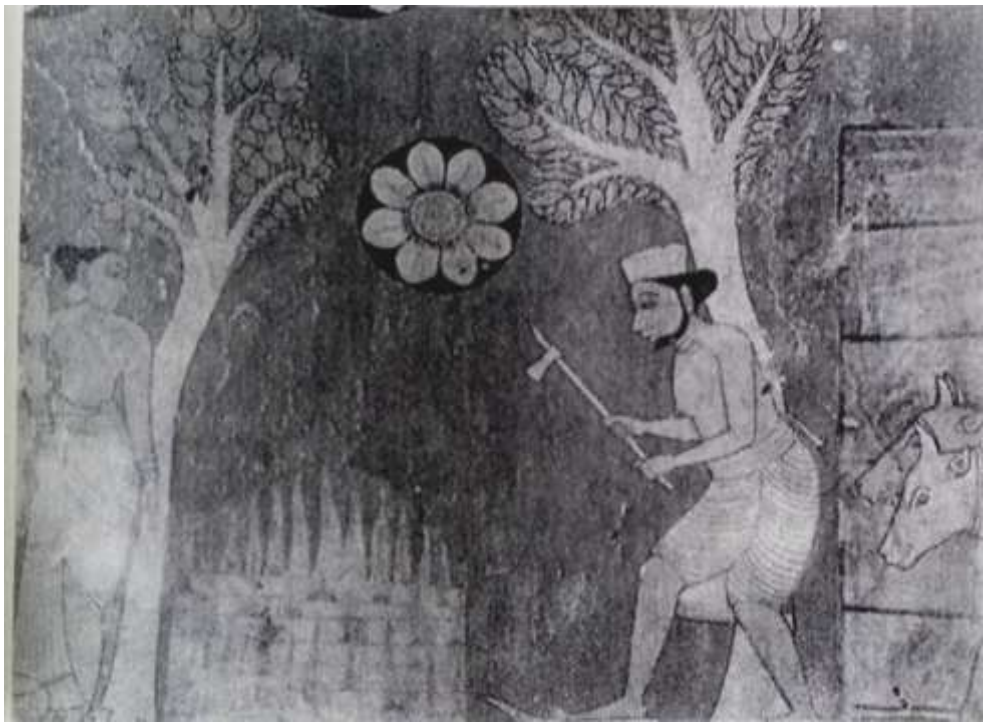

2b

Figure 3 Changes Made to Line Drawings by Manjusri (1977)

3a Weeping mother (circled), *Uraga Jatāka*, Medawala TV, middle eighteenth century

3b Plate CV-05 of Manjusri (1977)

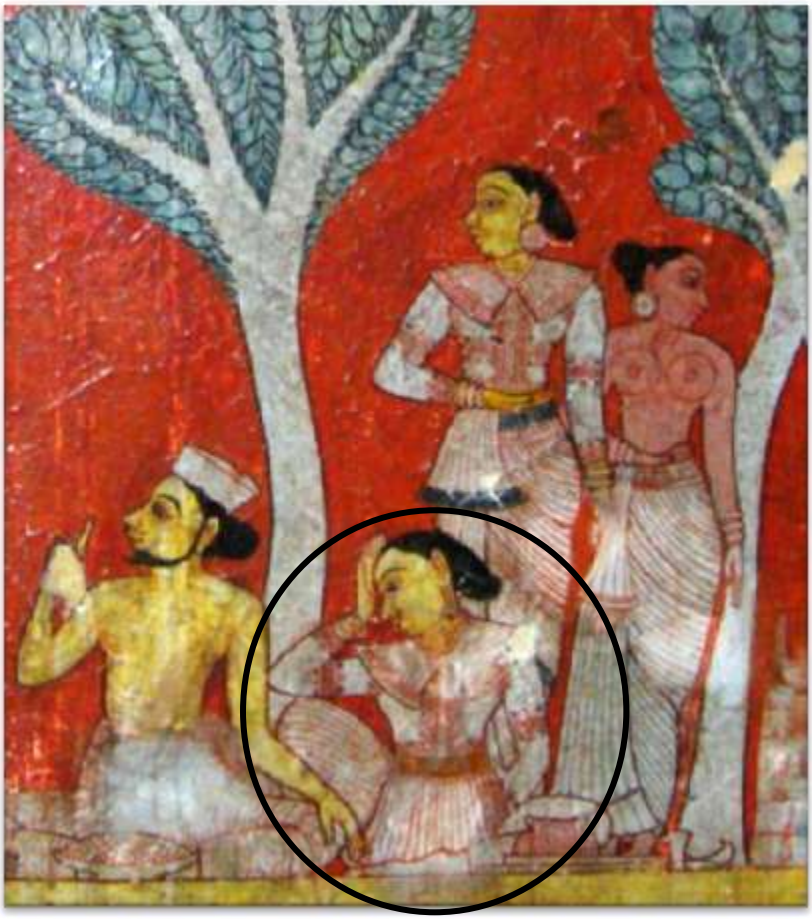

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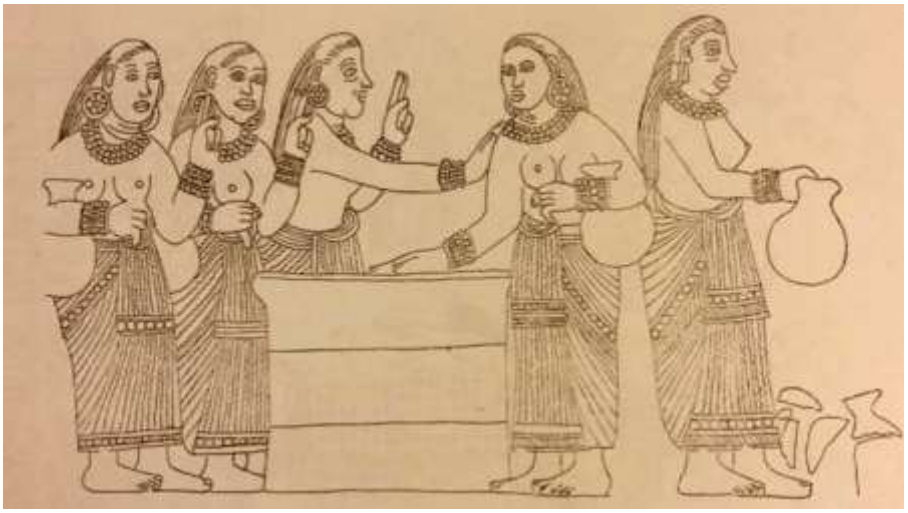
Figure 4 Changes made to Line Drawings by Manjusri (1977)

4a The upward breasts of Amitatapa (circled), *Vessantara Jātaka*, Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century

4b Plate CX of Manjusri (1977)

4a



4b

Figure 5 The Number of Times each *Jātaka* Story is Depicted in Murals

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SVJ
MUJ
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MCJ
KDJ
MSJ
KDJ
SKJ
MSTJ
MPKJ
KTJ
AMJ
ABJ
SNRJ
SCJ
CPD
MJ
MPJ
KGJ
LJ
UJ
SBJ
MDJ
MKJ
HJ
SNJ
MJJ
NJ
VPJ
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Figure 6 The Chronology of Pre-modern Murals

Middle 18th	Late 18th	Early 19th	Middle 19th	Late 19th	Early 20th
3	21	24	10	36	5

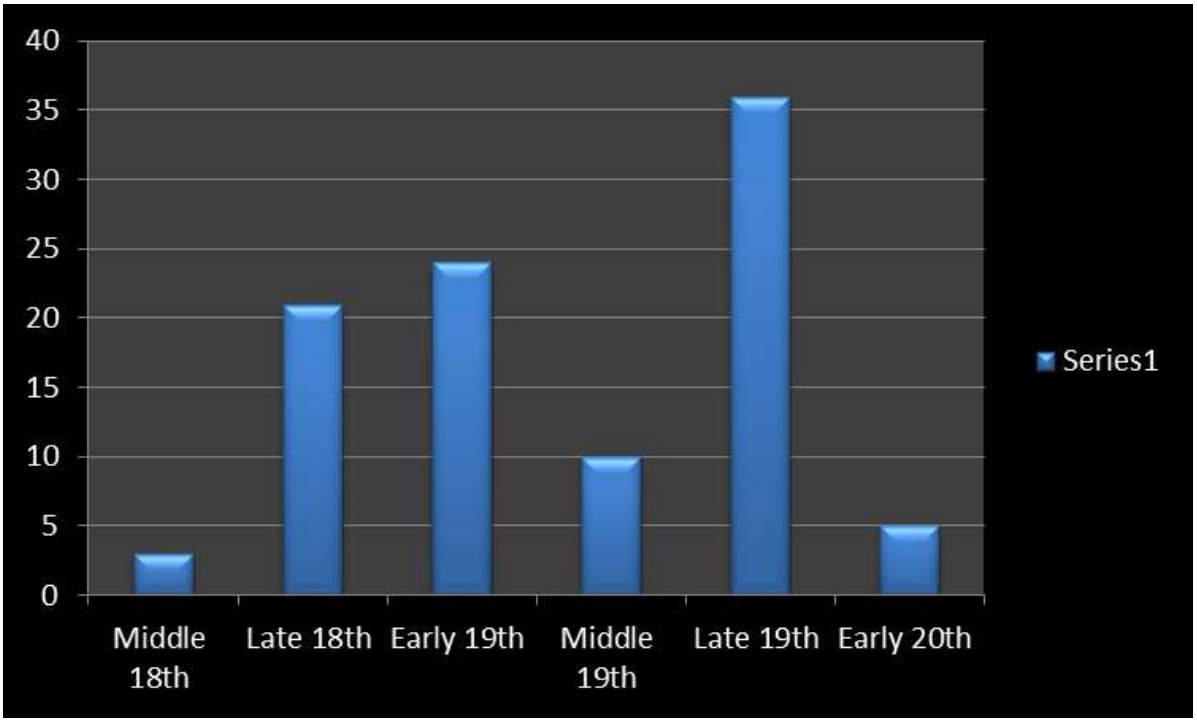

Figure 7 The Distribution Pattern of Temples Selected in the Research

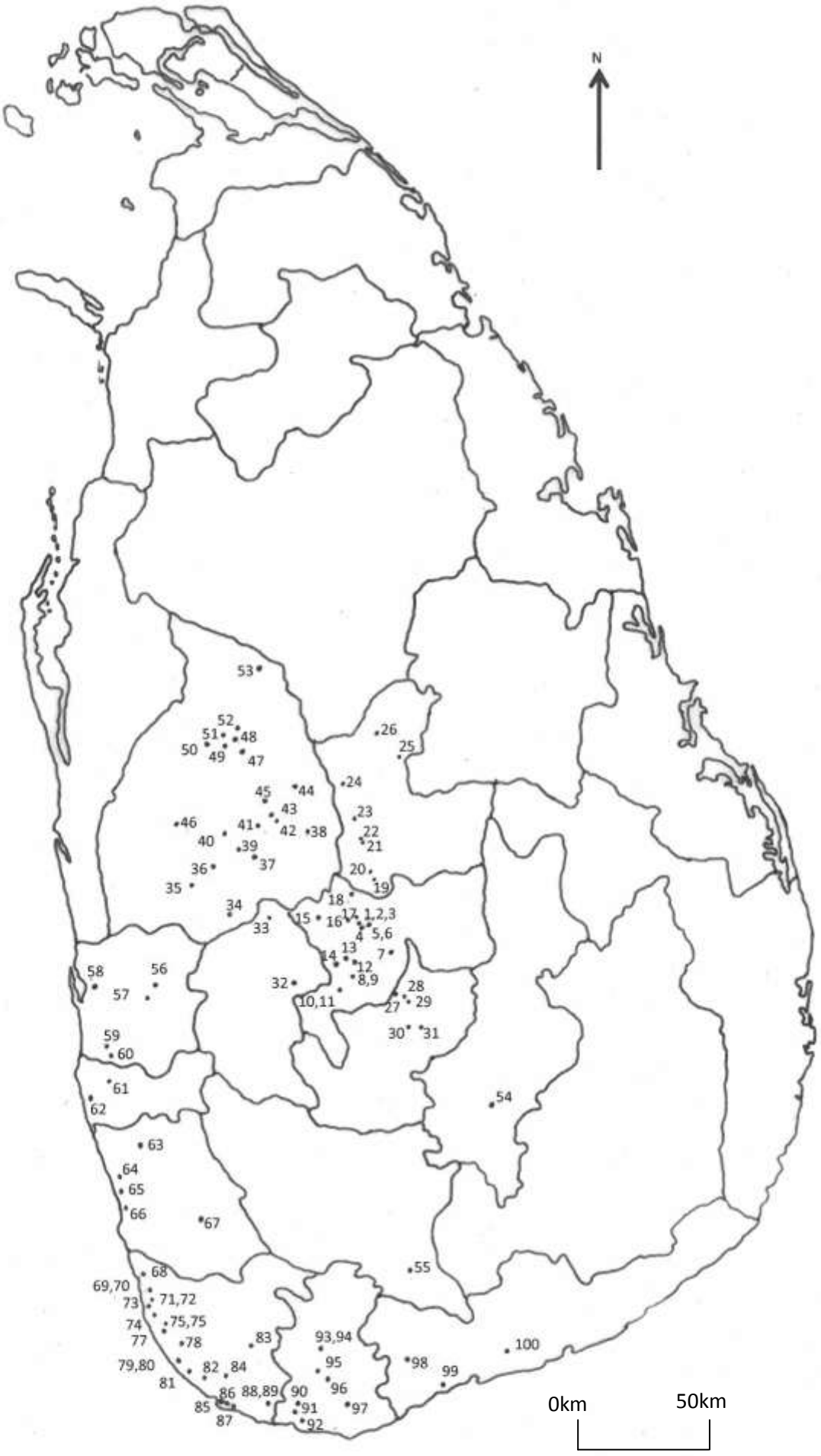
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Figure 8 Buddhist Nuns

8a Arrival of the nun Sangamitta, Historical events of Sri Lanka, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

8b Sangamitta and nuns at the Sri Maha Bodhi, Historical events of Sri Lanka, Dambulla RMV, late eighteenth century

8a

8b

Figure 9 Buddhist Nuns

9 a Patachara entering the order of nuns, the story of Patacara, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

9 b The Buddha flanked by monks and nuns, The events of Buddha's life, Navaratnagoda PV, early nineteenth century

9a

9b

Figure 10 Religious Practices of Women: Visiting Religious Places

10a Group of men and women visiting a religious place, The events of Buddha's life, Gangarama RMV, late eighteenth century

10b Men and women visiting a temple, Dewagiri RMV, late nineteenth century

10a

10b

Figure 11 Religious Practices of Women: Sujata's Alms-giving, The Events of Buddha's life

11 a Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

11 b Katudeniya PV, late nineteenth century

11 c Gangarama RMV, late eighteenth century

11a

11b

11c

Figure 12 Religious Practices of Women: Sujata's Alms-giving, The Events of Buddha's Life

12 a Preparing the alms, Bambaragala RMV, middle nineteenth century

12 b Preparing the alms, Dambawa TV, middle eighteenth century

12 c Carrying the alms, Katudeniya PV, late nineteenth century

12 d Carryingthe alms, Kitulpe RMV, early twentieth century

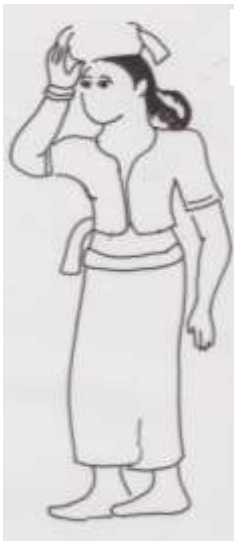
12e Carrying the alms, Samudragiri PV,late nineteenth century

12 f Offering the alms, Bambaragala RMV, middle nineteenth century

12g Offering the alms, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

12a

12b



12c

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12e

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Figure 13 Religious Practices of Women: Alms-giving

13 a Offering alms by women, The events of Buddha's life, Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century

13 b Offering alms by a merchant and his wife, The story of Soreyya, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

13 c Offering alms by the king and queen, *Vessantara Jatāka*, Arattana RMV, late eighteenth century

13 d Offering food by Amaradevi, *Ummagga Jatāka*, Ranvella PV, late nineteenth century

13a

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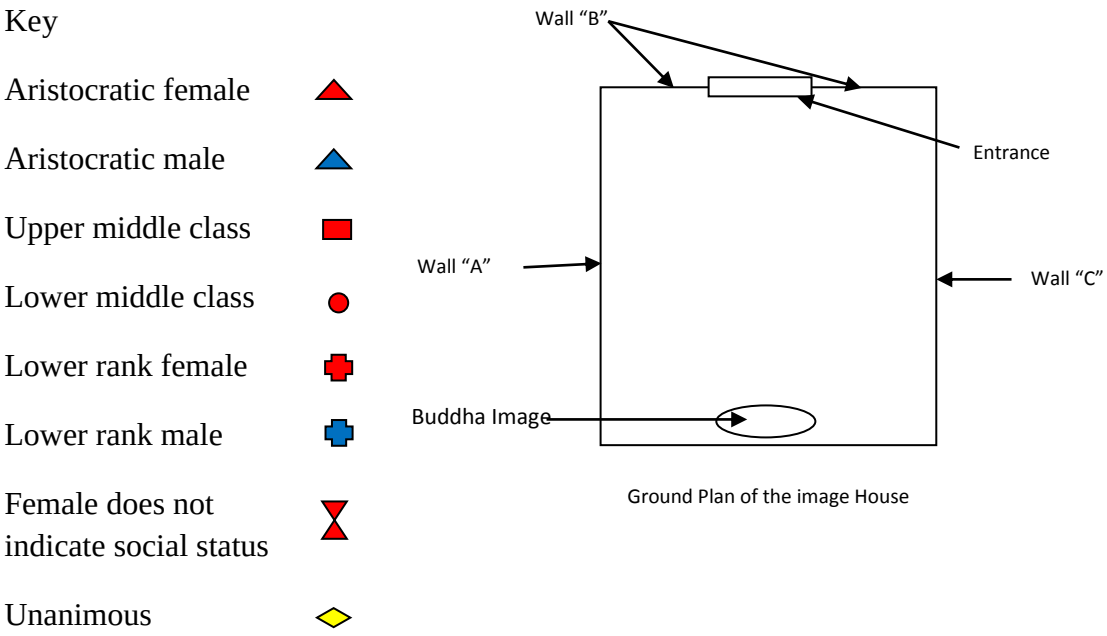
Figure 14 Schematic Plan of the Painting on the Walls and Their Patronage, Garakmedilla RMV



Distribution of 31 painting scenes and the Layout of their Patronage

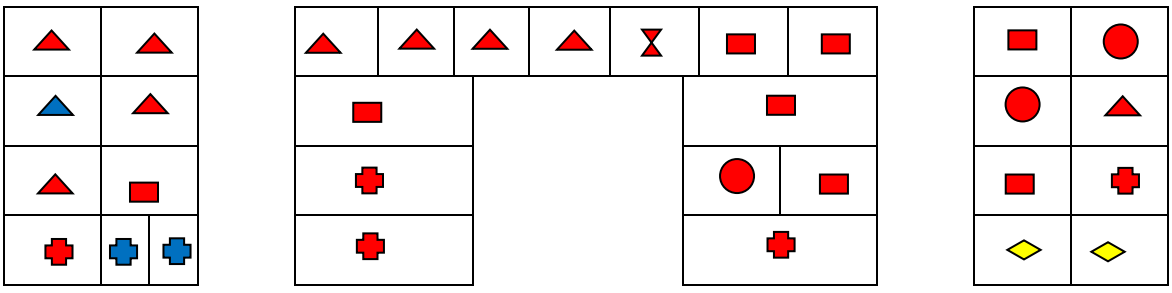


Figure 15 Female Patrons

15 a Figure of Buddha Mangala and its donative inscription, Ranavana Walauve Tikiri Kumarihami, Garakmedilla RMV, early twentieth century

15 b Figure of Buddha in his first week after attaining the Buddhahood and its donative inscription, Henayale Gedara Kuda Ridi, Garakmedilla RMV, early twentieth century

15 c A female donor, the events of Buddha's life, Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century

15a

15b

15c

Figure 16 Religious Practices of Women: Religious Disclosure

16a Listening to Buddhist disclosure, The events of Buddha's life, Potgul Maliga MV, early nineteenth century

16b Listening to religious disclosure, *Ksāntivadi Jatāka,* Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

16c Listening to Buddhist disclosure, The events of Buddha's life, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

16a

16b

16c

Figure 17 The Earth Goddess: The Events of Buddha's Life

17 a Gangarama RMV, late eighteenth century

17b RMV, late eighteenth century

17c Madanwala RMV, late eighteenth century

1 d Ranvella PV, late nineteenth century

17a

17b

17c

17d

Figure 18 The Earth Goddess, the Events of Buddha's Life in Different Temples

18a Vagolla PV, early twentieth century

18b Ranvella PV, late nineteenth century

18c Bodhimalu PV, late nineteenth century

18d Subodharama RMV, late nineteenth century

18e Madanwala RMV, late eighteenth century

18f Hindagala RMV, early nineteenth century

18g Sanveli RMV, early nineteenth century

18h Potgul Maliga RMV, early nineteenth century

18i Gangarama RMV, late eighteenth century

18j Katudeniya PV, late nineteenth century

18k Niyandawane RMV, early twentieth century

18a

18b

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18e

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18h

18i

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18k

Figure 19 Schematic Plan of the Usage of Female Figures at Temple Entrances

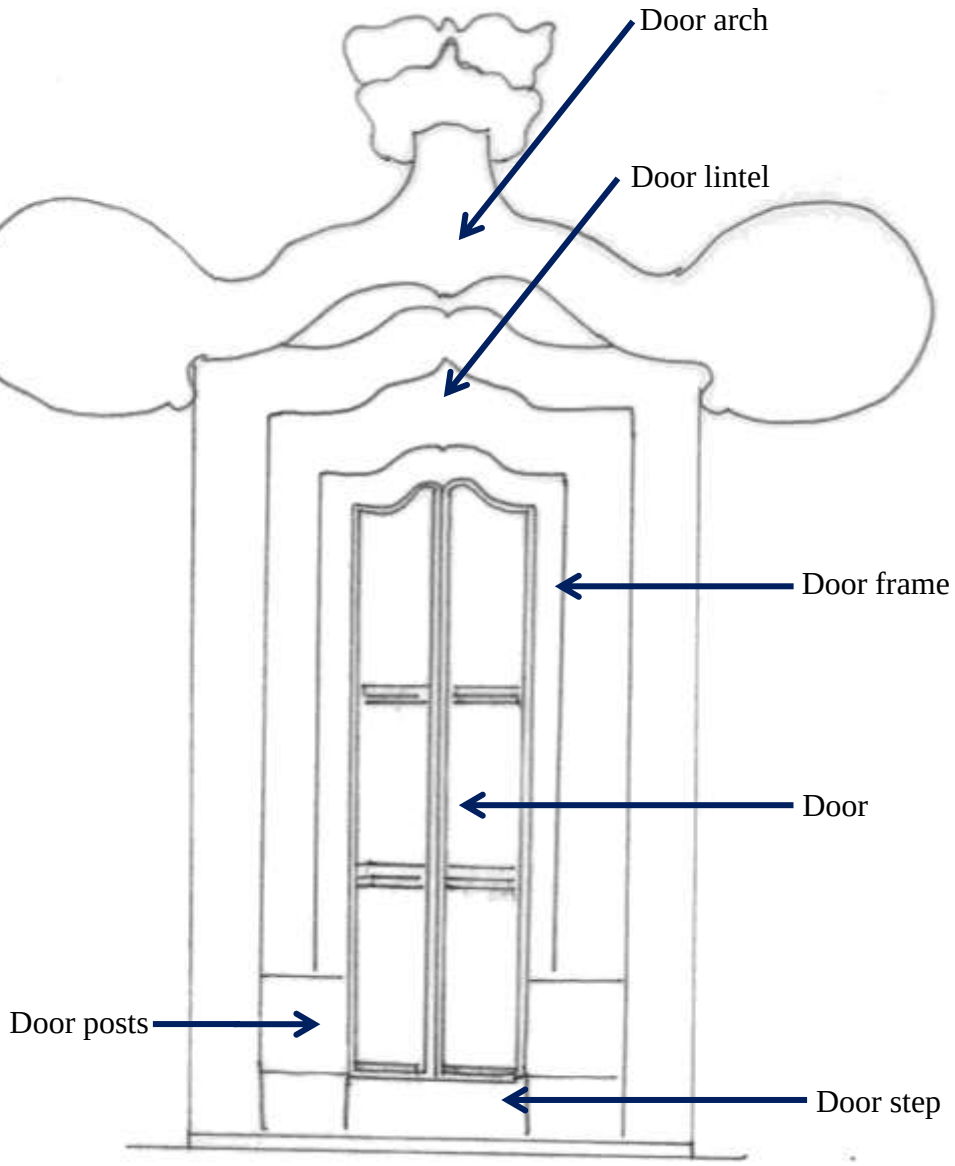
Door arch
Door lintel
Door frame
Door
Door posts
Door step

Figure 20 Goddess Lakshmi

20a A stone carving of Issurumuni Vihara (late-historic)

20b A metallic sculpture of Jetawana monastery (late-historic)

20c Galpota inscription in Polonnaruwa (early-medieval)

20d A stone carving, Dalada Maligawa, Yapahuwa (late-medieval)

20a

20b

20c

20d

Figure 21 Goddess Lakshmi in Other Art Forms

21a A bronze carving on the roof of Embekke Dewala, seventeenth century

21b Lakshmi, a stone carving at an entrance of Dalada Maligawa, middle eighteenth century

21c A wooden carving at the entrance of Uda-Aludeniya RMV, fifteenth century

21a

21b

21c

Figure 22 Goddess Lakshmi

22a Goddess Lakshmi on the doorway, Mulkirigala RMV, late nineteenth century

22b Close-up of 22a, showing the Goddess Lakshmi on the doorway, Mulkirigala RMV, late nineteenth century

22a

22b

Figure 23 Queen Victoria

23a Portrait of Queen Victoria above the two entrances of the image house, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

23b Close-up of Queen Victoria above the left entrance of the image house, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century. Note the name of the temple written in English

23c Close-up of Queen Victoria above the right entrance of the image house, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

23a

23b

23c

Figure 24 Incorporation of British Emblem into the Buddhist Temple Architecture

24a The British emblem at the entrance arch, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

24b The British emblem at the entrance arch, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

24c The British emblem at an entrance door, Kumara PV, late nineteenth century

24d The British emblem at an entrance door, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

24a

24b

24c

24d

Figure 25 Images of Queen Victoria

25a The entrance of the image house, Kotte RMV, late nineteenth century. Note the lions are taken from the coat of arms of the East India Company

25b The entrance of the image house, Sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century. Note the lions are taken from the coat of arms of the East India Company

25c The wall of image house, Gangarama PV, late nineteenth century

25d The wall of Image house, Telambugala RMV, late nineteenth century

25a

25b

25c

25d

Figure 26 Queen Victoria

26 a Queen Victoria and the British emblem on the walls of palace depicted in a mural, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

26 b Close-up of Queen Victoria and the British emblem as shown in 26a, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

26a

26b

Figure 27 Composite Female Figures at the Entrances

27 a *Catur-nāri-pallakki,* Kotte RMV,late nineteenth century

27 b *Panca-nārighaṭa,*Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

27 c *Nava-nāri-kuñjara,*RidiVihāra,late eighteenth century

27a

27b

27c

Figure 28 Composite Female Figures in other Art Forms

28 a *Catur-nāri-pallakki* at an entrance of Edanduwawa PV, early nineteenth century

28 b *Pañca-nārighaṭa*at an entrance of DaladaMaligawa, middle eighteenth century

c *Sapta-nāri-rata* a wooden plaque, National Museum Kandy (Cupboard no: 20), circa eighteenth century

28a

28b

28c

Figure 29 ***Nāri-latā***

29 a *Nāri-latā* at the entrance, Gangarama PV, late nineteenth century

29b *Nāri-latā* on the door, Asgiri Gedige RMV, early nineteenth century

29c *Nāri-latā* on the doorway, Vagolla PV, early twentieth century

29d *Nāri-latā* on the ceiling, Potgul Maliga RMV, early nineteenth century

29a

29b

29c

29d

Figure 30 ***Nāri-latā***

30a *Nāri-latā* on the top level of the wall, Asgiri Gedige RMV, early nineteenth century

30b *Nāri-latā* on the lower level of the wall, Kaballena RMV, Dagama, late nineteenth century

30c Close-up of *Nāri-latā* on the door, Bambaragala RMV, middle nineteenth century

30d Close-up of *Nāri-latā* on the wall, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

30a

30b

30c

30d

Figure 31 ***Nāri-latā***

31a On the ceiling, Jetavanarama RMV, middle nineteenth century

31b On the ceiling, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

31c On the ceiling, Madanwala RMV, late eighteenth century

31d On the ceiling, Potgul Maliga RMV, early nineteenth century

31e On the ceiling, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

31f On the door, Bambaragala RMV, middle nineteenth century

31g On the door, Veligodapola TV, early nineteenth century

31h On the wall, Kelaniya RMV, late nineteenth century

31a

31b

31c

31d

31e

31f

31g

31h

Figure 32 ***Nāri-latā***

32a On the wall, Asgiri Gedige RMV, early nineteenth century

32b On the door-way, Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century

32c On the ceiling, Ptgul Maliga RMV, early nineteenth century

32d On the wall, Asgiri Gedige RMV, early nineteenth century

32e On the door, Udasgiri PV, late nineteenth century

32f On the ceiling, Ptgul Maliga RMV, early nineteenth century

32g On the door-way, Subadrarama PV, late nineteenth century

32h On the door, Bambaragala RMV, Vaduwava, middle nineteenth century

32i On the door, Pokunivita RMV, early nineteenth century

32a

32b

32c

32d

32e

32f

32g

32h

32i

Figure 33 *Nāri-latā* in Other Art Forms

33a *Nāri-latā* on an ivory comb, The British Museum, (Reg no: OA 1982.11.12.1) seventeenth-eighteenth century Circa

33b *Nāri-latā* on a betel bag (cloth), National Museum Kandy (Cupboard no: 6), seventeenth-eighteenth century Circa

33c*Nāri-latā* on a pot, National Museum Kandy (Cupboard no: 35), seventeenth-eighteenth century Circa

33d *Nāri-latā* on the stone stair-way, Potgul Maliga RMV, early nineteenth century

33a

33b

33c

33d

Figure 34 Religious Life of Women

34a A noble woman visiting religious place, Gangarama RMV, middle eighteenth century

34b A noble woman listening religious disclosure, Gangarama RMV, middle eighteenth century

34c Mandri as an ascetic, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Asgiri Gedige RMV, early nineteenth century

34d Mandri as an ascetic, *Vessantara Jātaka*,Asgiri Gedige RMV, early nineteenth century

34e Mandri as an ascetic, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Vagolla PV, early twentieth century

34a

34b

34c

34d

34e

Figure 35 Emotions of Women:Weeping Mandri

35a Weeping Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka,* Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

3 b Weeping Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

35a

35b

Figure 36 Sins and Consequences

36a A prostitute receiving money, *Ummagga Jātaka*, Ranvella PV, late nineteenth century

36b Prostitutes receiving money, Scenes of Hell, Kumara MV, late nineteenth century

36c Men and women suffering at the Hell as a punishment for polygamy, Sudarshanarama PV, Karapitiya, late nineteenth century

36d Men and women suffering at the Hells a punishment for abortion, Sudarshanrama PV, Karapitiya, late nineteenth century

36a

36b

36c

36d

Figure 37 Religious Space Given to Female Figures

37a A row of Laywomen depicted in the upper panel (see the arrow) in a continuous narrative registries, Gangarama RMV, Middle eighteenth century

37b The close-up of Laywomen depicted in the upper panel in a continuous narrative registries, Gangarama RMV, Middle eighteenth century

37a

37b

Figure 38 Religious Life of Women

38a Yasodhara worshiping the Buddha, The events of Buddha's life, Gangarama RMV, middle eighteenth century

38b Yasodhara worshiping the Buddha, The events of Buddha's life, Gangarama RMV, middle eighteenth century

38a

38b

Figure 39 Role of Mother: Pregnancy

39a A pregnant woman, *Tēlapatta Jātaka*, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

39b Pregnant queen Mahamaya, The events of Buddha's life, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

39c Pregnant Patacara, The story of Patacara, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

39d A pregnant woman, *Tēlapatta Jātaka*, Potgul Maliga RMV, early nineteenth century

39a

39b

39c

39d

Figure 40 Role of Mother: Pregnancy

40a Pregnant queen Mahamaya, The events of Buddha's life, Suriyagoda RMV, late eighteenth century

40b A pregnant woman, The story of Sumana Situ, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

40c Pregnant Patacara, The story of Patacara, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

40d A pregnant woman, *Tēlapatta Jātaka,* Potgul Maliga RMV, early nineteenth century

40e Pregnant queen Mahamaya, The events of Buddha's life, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

40f A pregnant woman, *Tēlapatta Jātaka,* Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

40g A pregnant woman, *Sāma Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

40h Pregnant Patacara, The story of Patacara, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

40i Pregnant queen Mahamaya, The events of Buddha's life, Sudarshanarama PV, Karapitiya, late nineteenth century

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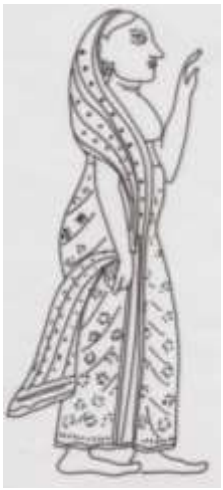

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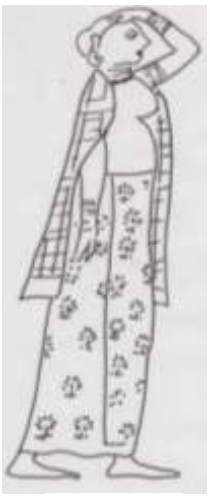

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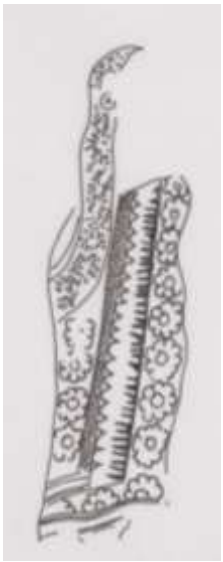

40i

Figure 41 Role of Mother: Child Birth

41a Child birth, *Tēmīya Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

41b Birth of Prince Siddharta, The events of Buddha's life, Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

41c Birth of Prince Siddharta, The events of Buddha's life, Ranvella PV, middle eighteenth century

41d Birth of Prince Siddharta, The events of Buddha's life, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

41a

41b

41c

41d

Figure 42 Role of Mother: Breastfeeding

42a *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka,* Ganekanda PV, late eighteenth century

42b *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

42c *Vessantara Jātaka,* Hindagala RMV, early nineteenth century

42d *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka,* Niyandawane RMV, early twentieth century

42a

42b

42c

42d

Figure 43 Role of Mother: Breastfeeding

43a *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka,* Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century

43b, *Vessantara Jātaka,* Nagavimana PV, early nineteenth century

43c, Wood carving, Embekke Dewala, seventeenth century

43d Ivory Comb, National Museum, Colombo (Cupboard no: 27), circa seventeenth-eighteenth century

43a

43b

43c

43d

Figure 44 Role of Mother: Breastfeeding

44a *Vessantara Jātaka,* Valagoda RMV, early nineteenth century

44b *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

44c *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

44d *Tēmīya Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

44e *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka,* Niyandawane RMV, early twentieth century

44f *Culla-darmapala Jātaka,* Ganekanda PV, late eighteenth century

44g *Vessantara Jātaka,* Arattana RMV, late eighteenth century

44h *Vessantara Jātaka,* Nagavimana PV, early nineteenth century

44i *Vessantara Jātaka,* Hindagala RMV, early nineteenth century

44a

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44i

Figure 45 Role of Mother: Breastfeeding

45a *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Ganekanda PV, late eighteenth century

45b Breastfeeding of a wet-nurse, *Tēmīya Jātaka*, Talawa RMV, late eighteenth century

45c *Vessantara Jātaka*, Veligodapola TV, early nineteenth century

45d *Vessantara Jātaka*, Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century

45e *Vessantara Jātaka*, Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century

45f *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Niyandawane RMV, early twentieth century

45a

45b

45c

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45f

46 Role of Mother: Selfless Care of Children

46a Patacara protecting the baby from rain, The story of Patacara, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

46b Patacara's efforts to rescue the children, The story of Patacara, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

46a

46b

Figure 47 Role of Mother: Child-rearing

47a The events of Buddha's life, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

47b *Vessantara Jātaka,* Veligodapola TV, early twentieth century

47d *Vessantara Jātaka,* Arattana RMV, late eighteenth century

47e *Tēlapatta Jātaka,* Potgul Maliga MV, early nineteenth century

47a

47b

47c

47d

Figure 48 Role of Mother: Child-rearing

48a *Vessantara Jātaka,* Bihalpola TV, early nineteenth century

48b *Vessantara Jātaka,* Kelaniya RMV, late nineteenth century

48c *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

48d *Vessantara Jātaka,* Degaldoruwa PV, late nineteenth century

48a

48b

48c

48d

Figure 49 Father as a Care-giver

49a *Vessantara Jātaka,* Bambaragala RMV, Vaduwawa, middle nineteenth century

49b The Story of Sumana situ, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

49c The events of Buddha's life, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

49d The story of Soreyya Situ, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

49a

49b

49c

49d

Figure 50 Father as a Care-giver

50a *Vessantara Jātaka,* Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

50b *Vessantara Jātaka,* Kumara MV, late nineteenth century

50c *Tēmīya Jātaka,* Talawa RMV, late eighteenth century

50d *Maha-darmapāla Jātaka,*Tunmahal V, late nineteenth century

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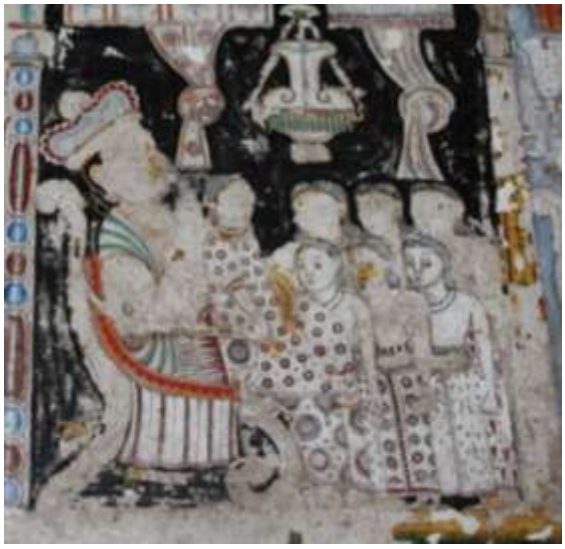

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Figure 51 Child-rearing as a Shared Responsibly of Both Father and Mother

51 a *Vessantara Jātaka,* Arattana RMV, late eighteenth century

51b *Vessantara Jātaka,*PotgulMaliga RMV, late nineteenth century

51c *Vessantara Jātaka,* Hindagala RMV, early nineteenth century

51d *Vessantara Jātaka,* Kelaniya RMV, late nineteenth century

51a

51b

51c

51d

Figure 52 Child-rearing as a Shared Responsibly of Both Father and Mother

52a *Tēmīya Jātaka*, Talawa RMV, late eighteenth century

52b *Vessantara Jātaka,* Nagavimana PV, early nineteenth century

52c *Vessantara Jātaka,* Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

52d The events of Buddha's life, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

52a

52b

52c

52d

Figure 53 Role of Women: Food Gathering: Mandri Food Gathering at the Forest

53a *Vessantara Jātaka,* Dowa RMV, early nineteenth century

53b *Vessantara Jātaka,* Medawala TV, middle eighteenth century

53c *Vessantara Jātaka,* Nagavimana PV, early nineteenth century

53d *Vessantara Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

53a

53b

53c

53d

Figure 54 Role of Women: Mandri Gathering Food

54a *Vessantara Jātaka,* Nagavimana PV, early nineteenth century

54b *Vessantara Jātaka,* Asgiri Gedige RMV, middle nineteenth century

54c *Vessantara Jātaka,* Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

54d *Vessantara Jātaka,* Ganekanda PV, late eighteenth century

54e *Vessantara Jātaka,* Dowa RMV, early nineteenth century

54f *Vessantara Jātaka,* Kumara MV, late nineteenth century

54g *Vessantara Jātaka,* Vagolla PV, early twentieth century

54h *Vessantara Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

54i *Vessantara Jātaka,* Kaballelena RMV, Dagama, late nineteenth century

54j *Vessantara Jātaka,* Medawala TV, middle eighteenth century

54k *Vessantara Jātaka,* Bihalpola TV, early nineteenth century

54a

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Figure 55 Cooking: Husband and Wife in the Kitchen

55a The story of Masuru situ, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

55b The events of Buddha's life, Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century

55c *Ummagga Jātaka*, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

55a

55b

55c

Figure 56 Role of Women: Water Fetching

56a Women at the well, fetching water, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Arattana RMV, late eighteenth century

56b Women at the well, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Bodhimalkada PV, late nineteenth century

56c Amaradevi fetching water, *Ummagga Jātaka*, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

56d A woman fetching water, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

56a

56b

56c

56d

Figure 57 Role of Women: Water Fetching

57a A *Vessantara Jātaka,* Hindagala RMV, early nineteenth century

57b A The events of Buddha's life, Bambaragala RMV, middle nineteenth century

57c The events of Buddha's life, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

57d *Ummagga Jātaka*, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

57a

57b

57c

57d

Figure 58 Role of women: Fetching Firewood

58a Women fetching firewood at the forest, *Kaṭṭhahāri Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

58b Amaradevi carrying a bundle of firewood, *Ummagga Jātaka,* Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

58a

58b

Figure 59 Family Meal

59a Husband and wife having food together, *Kaṭṭhahāri Jātaka,* Subodarama RMV, late nineteenth century

59b Husband and wife having food together, *Mahā Kaṇha Jātaka*, Pilikuttuwa RMV, late eighteenth century

59c Husband and wife serving food together, *Vessantara Jātaka,* Degaldoruwa RMV, late nineteenth century

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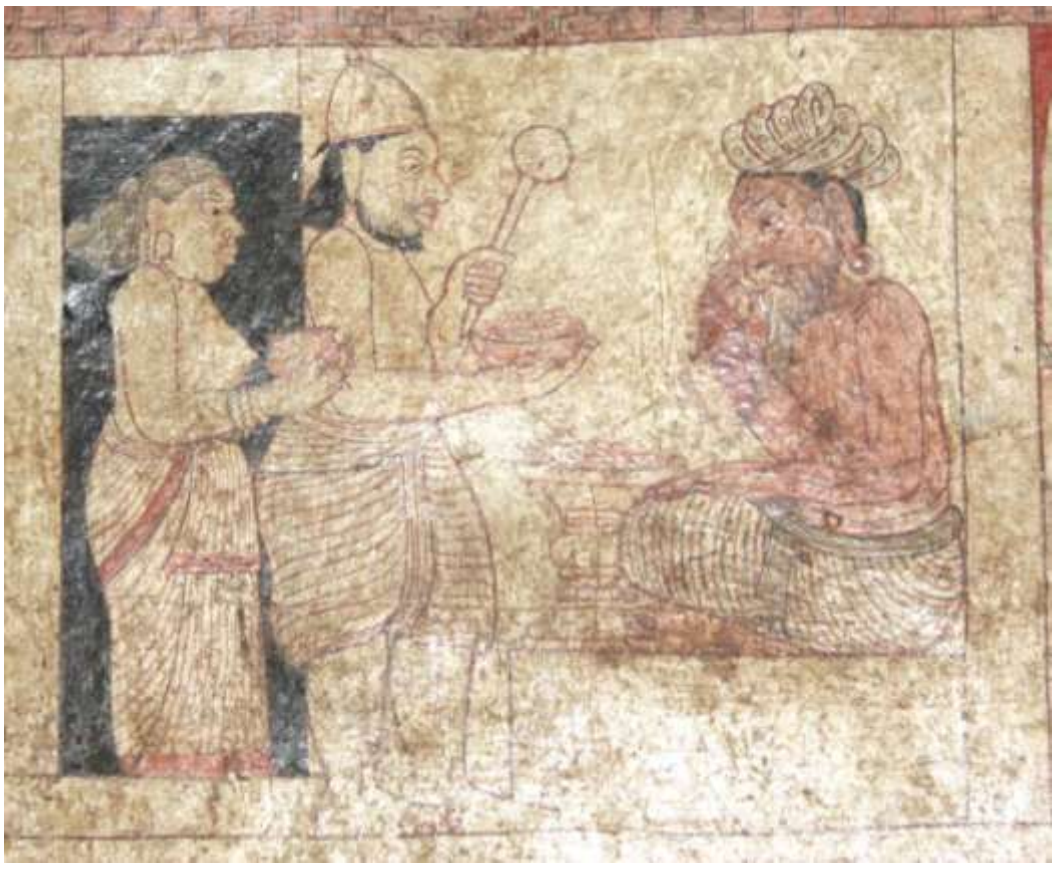

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Figure 60 Role of Women: Food Serving

60a Women food serving,*TēlapattaJātaka*, Mulkirigala RMV, late nineteenth century

60b Wife serving food to the husband, The story of Soreyya situ, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

60c Wife serving food to the husband, a sketch of Knox (1681)

60a

60b

60c

Figure 61 Role of Women: Cleaning Women

61a The events of Buddha's life, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

61b The events of Buddha's life, Subodarama RMV, late nineteenth century

61c The story of lay devotee Nandiya, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

61d The events of Buddha's life, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

61a

61b

61c

61d

Figure 62 Cleaning Men

62a The story of Patacara, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

62b Hevenly Scene, Sudarshanarama PV, Karapitiya , late nineteenth century

62c *Ummagga Jātaka*, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

62d *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka,* Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century

62a

62b

62c

62d

Figure 63 Cleaning Men

63a *Ummagga Jātaka,* Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

63b, *Culla-darmapāla Jatāka,* Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century

63c The events of Buddha's life, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

63d *Tēmīya Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

63e Hevenly Scene, Sudarshanarama PV, Karapitiya, late nineteenth century

63f The story of Patacara, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

63g The story of lay devotee Nandiya, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

63h The events of Buddha's life, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

63i The events of Buddha's life, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

63a

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Figure 64 Role of Women: Wife

64a Mandri cleaning the feet of her husband, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Talawa RMV, late eighteenth century

64b Amaradevi Washing the feet of her husband, *Ummagga Jātaka*, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

64a

64b

Figure 65 Role of Women in Agriculture

65a Faming scene, *Uraga Jātaka*, Medawala TV, middle eighteenth century

65b Women carry food to the field, *Uraga Jātaka*, Medawala TV, middle eighteenth century

65a

65b

Figure 66 Role of Women in Dairy: Sujata Milking Cow, The Events of Buddha's life

66a, Bambaragala RMV, middle nineteenth century

66b Dembawa TV,middle eighteenth century

66a

66b

Figure 67 Women in the Palace: Concubines

67a Concubines of the king, *Ksāntivādī Jātaka*, Subadrarama PV, late nineteenth century

67b Concubines of the king, *Saccaṃkira Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

67a

67b

Figure 68 Women in the Palace: Attendants Bear Fans

68a *Ummagga Jātaka*, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

68b The events of Buddha's life, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

68c The events of Buddha's life, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

68d The story of Patacara, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

68a

68b

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68d

Figure 69 Women in the Palace: Attendants Bear a Flywhisks and Fans

69a The events of Buddha's life, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

69b A, *Ummagga Jātaka*, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

69c The events of Buddha's life, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

69d The royal Palace, Kandy, circa seventeenth - nineteenth century

69a

69b

69c

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Figure 70 Women in the Palace: Attendants

70a A palace attendant bears a fan, Story of Patacara, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

70b A palace attendant bears a fan, *Vessantara Jātaka,* Kelaniya RMV, late nineteenth century

70c A palace attendant bears a fan, The events of Buddha's life, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

70d A palace attendant bears a *Vatāpat*, *Sutasōma Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

70e A palace attendant bears a *Vatāpat*, The events of Buddha's life, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

70f A palace attendant with Sēsat, The events of Buddha's life, Bambaragala RMV, middle nineteenth century

70g A palace attendant bears a flywhisk, heavenly scene, Talawa RMV, late eighteenth century

70h A palace attendant bears a flywhisk, The events of Buddha's life, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

70i A palace attendant bears a flywhisk, The events of Buddha's life, Bambaragala RMV, Vaduwawa, middle nineteenth century

70a

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70c

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70g

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Figure 71 Women in the Palace: Attendants Bears a *Vatāpat*

71a A The events of Buddha's life, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

71b *Dahamsonḍa Jātaka*, Tunmahal V, early nineteenth century

71c *Kanḍahāla Jātaka*, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

71d A *Vatāpat* used in the pre-modern times, Telambugala RMV privet Museum, circa eighteenth century

71a

71b

71c

71d

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72a A male attendant handling the *Pankāh*, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Asgiri Gedige RMV, middle nineteenth century

72b A male attendant handling the *Pankāh*, *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century

72c A *Pankāh* used in the Royal Palace, Kandy, Archaeological Museum Kandy, circa seventeenth-nineteenth century [Reg nos: D.55-1-266 (old), L3 (new)]

72a

72b

72c

Figure 73 Women in the Palace: Attendants

73a Palace attendants bear flywhisk and *sēsat*, The events of Buddha's life, Bambaragala RMV, early nineteenth century

73b Palace attendants bear flywhisk, *Sēsat*, Umbrella and Flags The events of Buddha's life, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

73a

73b

Figure 74 Palace Attendants

74a Palace attendants bear flywhisk, *Sēsat, Aw Atta* and Flags, *Kaṭṭhahāri Jātaka* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

74b Palace attendants bear flywhisk and *Sēsat, Culla-darmapāla Jātaka* , Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

74c Palace attendants bear flywhisk, *Sēsat*, Umbrella and *Aw Atta*, The events of Sri Lankan History, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

74d Palace attendant bear Flags, Umbrella and *Aw Atta, Ummagga Jātaka*, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

74a

74b

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74d

Figure 75 Women in the Palace: Wet-nurses

75a Selecting Wet-nurses, The events of Buddha's life, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

75b Breastfeeding Wet-nurse, *Tēmīya Jātaka*, Talawa RMV, late eighteenth century

75c Care-giving by Wet-nurses, The events of Buddha's life, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

75d Wet-nurses receiving gifts, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

75a

75b

75c

75d

Figure 76 Women in the Palace: Kitchen Maids

76a Women at the royal kitchen, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Kotte RMV, late nineteenth century

76b Women at the royal kitchen, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Mulkirigala RMV, late nineteenth century

76c Women at the royal kitchen, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

76a

76b

76c

Figure 77 Men at the Royal Kitchen

77a *Vessantara Jātaka,*Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

77b *Vessantara Jātaka,* Kumara MV, late nineteenth century

77c *Vessantara Jātaka,* Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

77d *Vessantara Jātaka,* Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

77a

77b

77c

77d

Figure 78 Women in the Palace: Kitchen Maids

78a A woman scraping coconut at the royal kitchen, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, late nineteenth century

78b A woman scraping coconut at the royal kitchen, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Kotte RMV, late nineteenth century

78c A woman scraping coconut at the royal kitchen, *Vessantara Jātaka*,

78d A woman scraping coconut at the royal kitchen, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Pilikuttuwa RMV, late eighteenth century

78e A woman scraping coconut at the royal kitchen, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

78f A woman grinding ingredients at the royal kitchen, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Kotte RMV, late nineteenth century

78g A woman fetching water to the royal kitchen, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sunadarama PV, early nineteenth century

78h A woman lighting up fire at the royal kitchen, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sunadarama PV, early nineteenth century

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Figure 79 Men at the Royal Kitchen

79a *Vessantara Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

79b *Vessantara Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

79c *Vessantara Jātaka,* Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

79d *Vessantara Jātaka,* Kumara MV, late nineteenth century

79e *Vessantara Jataka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

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79b

79c

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Figure 80 Men at the Royal Kitchen: Food Serving

80a *Vessantara Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

80b *Vessantara Jātaka,* Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

80c *Vessantara Jātaka,* Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

80a

80b

80c

Figure 81 Women in the Palace: Kitchen Maids, Serving food

81a *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

81b *Vessantara Jātaka*, Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

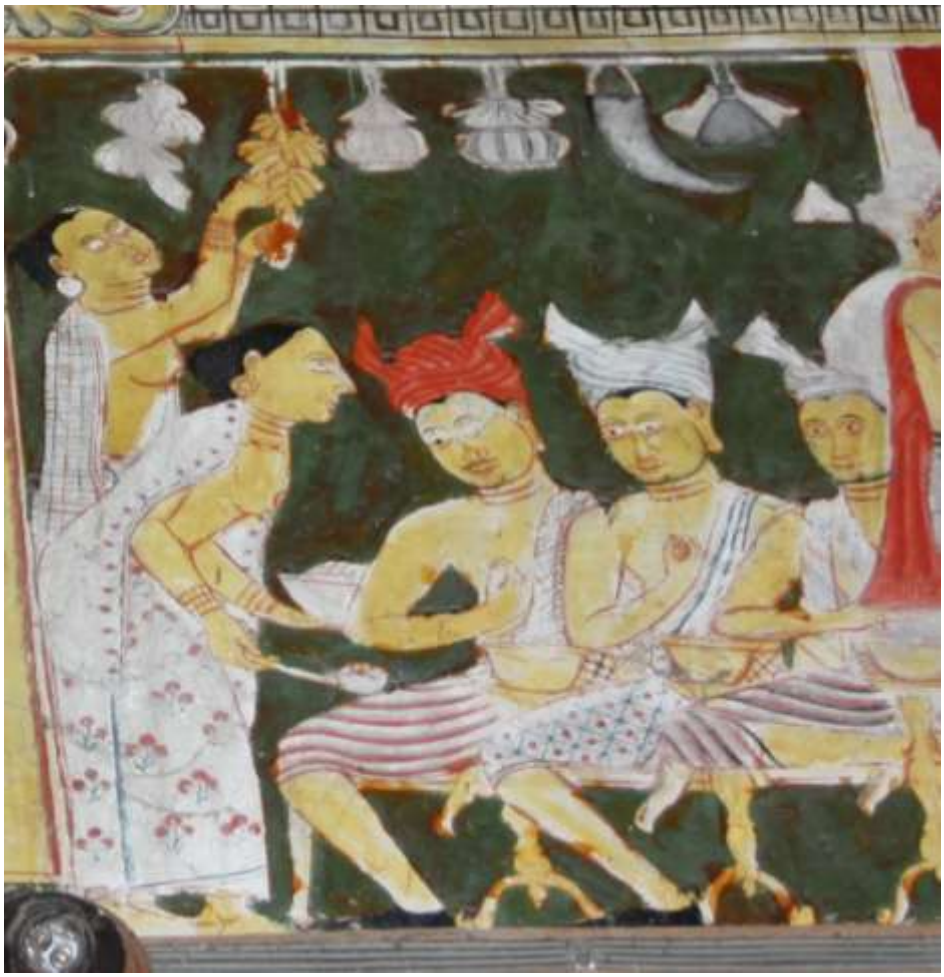

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Figure 82 Women in Cultural Activities: Female Musicians

82a *Tēlapatta Jātaka*, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

82b The events of Buddha's life, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

82c The events of Buddha's life, Subadrarama PV, late nineteenth century

82a

82b

82c

82d

Figure 83 Women in Cultural Activities: Female Drummers

83a The events of Buddha's life, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

83b The events of Buddha's life, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

83c The events of Buddha's life, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

83d *Vessantara Jataka,* Hindagala RMV, early nineteenth century

83e *Tēlapatta Jātaka*, Dowa RMV, early nineteenth century

83f The events of Buddha's life, Sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

83g *Tēlapatta Jātaka*, Sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

83h *Tēlapatta Jātaka*, Tunmahal PV, early nineteenth century

83i Heavenly scene, Telwatta RMV, earlynineteenth century

83j, The events of Buddha's life, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

83k *Tēlapatta Jātaka,* Mulkirigala RMV, late nineteenth century, late nineteenth century

83l *Tēlapatta Jātaka,* Sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

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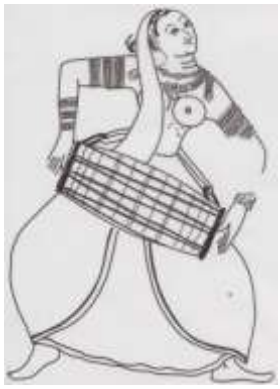

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83l

Figure 84 Women in Cultural Activities

84a Woman playing a *Vina*, The events of Buddha's life, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

84b Woman playing a *Vina*, The events of Buddha's life, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

84c Woman playing a *Vina,* The events of Buddha's life, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

84d Woman playing a *Vina, Telapatta Jataka*, Dowa RMV, early nineteenth century

84e Woman playing a *Vina*, The events of Buddha's life, Sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

84f Woman playing a *Vina*, The events of Buddha's life, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

84g Woman playing a *Violin*, The story of Mahandana Situ, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

84h Woman playing a symbol, Heavenly scene, Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

84I Woman playing a trumpet , *Tēlapatta Jātaka*, Mulkirigala RMV, late nineteenth century

84j Woman playing a trumpet, The events of Buddha's life, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

84k Woman playing a symbol, The events of Buddha's life, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

84a

84b

84c

84d

84e

84f

84g

84h

84i

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84k

Figure 85 Women in Cultural Activities: Female Musicians

85a The events of Buddha's life, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

85b *Tēlapatta Jātaka,* Mulkirigala RMV, late nineteenth century

85a

85b

Figure 86 Women in Cultural Activities: Female Dancers

86a The events of Buddha's life, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

86b The story of Mahandana Situ, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

86c *Ummagga Jataka*, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

86d Decorative motif on the wall, Gangarama PV, late nineteenth century

86a

86b

86c

86d

Figure 87 Women in Cultural Activities : Female Dancers

87a *Kattahari Jataka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

87b The events of Buddha's life, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

87c The events of Buddha's life, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

87d *Ummagga Jataka,* Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

87e Decorative motif on the wall, Gangarama PV, late nineteenth century

87f *Telapatta Jataka,* Sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

87g The events of Buddha's life, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

87h The events of Buddha's life, Sudarshanrama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

87i The events of Buddha's life, Pamunuwa PV, late eighteenth century

87j *Telapatta Jataka,* Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century

87k The story of Mahandana Situ, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

87l The events of Buddha's life, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

87a

87b

87c

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87j

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87l

Figure 88 Women in Cultural Activities: Female Dancers

88a The events of Buddha's life, Gangarama RMV, late eighteenth century

88b The events of Buddha's life, Sulunapahura PV, late eighteenth century

88c The events of Buddha's life, Ridi Vihara, late eighteenth century

88d *Tēlapatta Jātaka,* Mulkirigala RMV, late nineteenth century

88a

88b

88c

88d

Figure 89 women's Contribution to Cultural Activities: Female Dancers

89a The events of Buddha's life, Dambulla RMV, late eighteenth century

89b The events of Buddha's life, Ridi Vihara, late eighteenth century

89c Decorative motif on the wall, Subodarama RMV, late nineteenth century

89d The events of Buddha's life, Sulunapahura PV, late eighteenth century

89a

89b

89c

89d

Figure 90 Women in Cultural Activities: Female Dancers in Other Art Forms

90a Ivory comb, National museum Colombo, (Reg no: 38.78880) circa eighteenth century

90b wood carving, EmbekkeDewala, seventeenth century

90c Jewelry box (ivory), British Museum (Reg no: 1892.02.06.25)circa seventeenth century

90d stone carving, Gadaladeniya RMV, late eighteenth century

90a

90b

90c

90d

Figure 91 Women Working in Shops

91a*TēlapattaJātaka*, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

91b*Tēlapatta Jātaka*, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

91c *Tēlapatta Jātaka*, Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century

91d*Tēlapatta Jātaka*, Mulkirigala RMV, late nineteenth century

91a

91b

91c

91d

Figure 92 Queen suckles the Baby While King in the Royal Court

92a, *Mahasilava Jataka*, Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century

92b *Mahasilava Jataka*, Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century

92a

92b

Figure 93 King and Queen at a Discussion

93a *Tēmiya Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

9 b The story of King Vijaya, Potgul Maliga MV, early nineteenth century

93c *Ummagga Jātaka,* Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

93d The story of Sumna situ, Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

93a

93b

93c

93d

Figure 94 King and Queen at a Discussion

94a, Un identified story Subadrarama PV, late nineteenth century

94b The events of Buddha's life, Bambaragala RMV, middle nineteenth century

94c *Khandahala Jataka*,Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

94d *Ummagga Jataka*, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

94a

94b

94c

94d

Figure 95 King and Queen in the Palace

95a *Saccamkira Jātaka,* Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

95b *Ummagga Jātaka,* Uttamarama PV, late nineteenth century

95c *Vessantara Jātaka,* Ganekanda PV, late eighteenth century

95d *Dahamsonda Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

95a

95b

95c

95d

Figure 96 Family Discussions

96a Unidentified story, Niyandawane RMV, early twentieth century

96b *Swarna Kakkata Jātaka*, Saseruwa RMV, early nineteenth century

96c Unidentitied story, Subadrarama PV, late nineteenth century

96d The story of Patacara, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

96a

96b

96c

96d

Figure 97 Dominance of the Household: Amitatapa Thrashing Her Husband Jujaka

97a, *Vessantara Jātaka,* Arattana RMV, late eighteenth century

97b *Vessantara Jātaka*, Bihalpola TV, early nineteenth century

97c *Vessantara Jātaka,* Nagavimana PV, early nineteenth century

97d *Vessantara Jātaka*, Bodhimalkada PV, late nineteenth century

97a

97b

97c

97d

Figure 98 Dominance of the Household: Jujaka Kneeling His Wife Amitatapa,

98a *Vessantara Jātaka*, Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

98b *Vessantara Jātaka*, Arattana RMV, late eighteenth century

98c *Vessantara Jātaka*, Vagolla PV, early twentieth century

98d *Vessantara Jātaka*, Asgiri Gedige RMV, middle nineteenth century

98a

98b

98c

98d

Figure 99 Intelligence of women: Amaradevi Involving Judiciary Affairs at the Royal Court

99a, *Ummagga Jātaka*, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

9 b *Ummagga Jātaka*, Uttamarama PV, late nineteenth century

99a

99b

Figure 100 Female Education

100a Men and women learning at a teacher, *Sattubatta Jātaka*, Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century

10 b Royal mother inscribing letters, *Kurudharma Jātaka*, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

100c Chief queen inscribing letters, *Kurudharma Jātaka*, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

100d Prostitute inscribing letters, *Kurudharma Jātaka*, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

100a

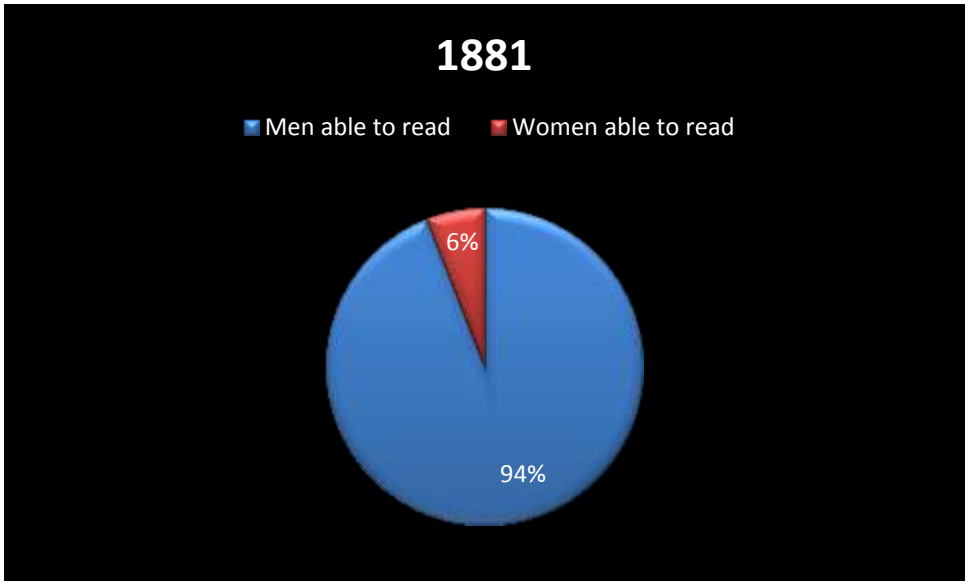
100b

100c

100d

Figure 101 The Difference of Male and Female Literacy

	In 1881
Men able to read	46331
Women able to read	2944
	In 1891
Men able to read	51536
Women able to read	3282



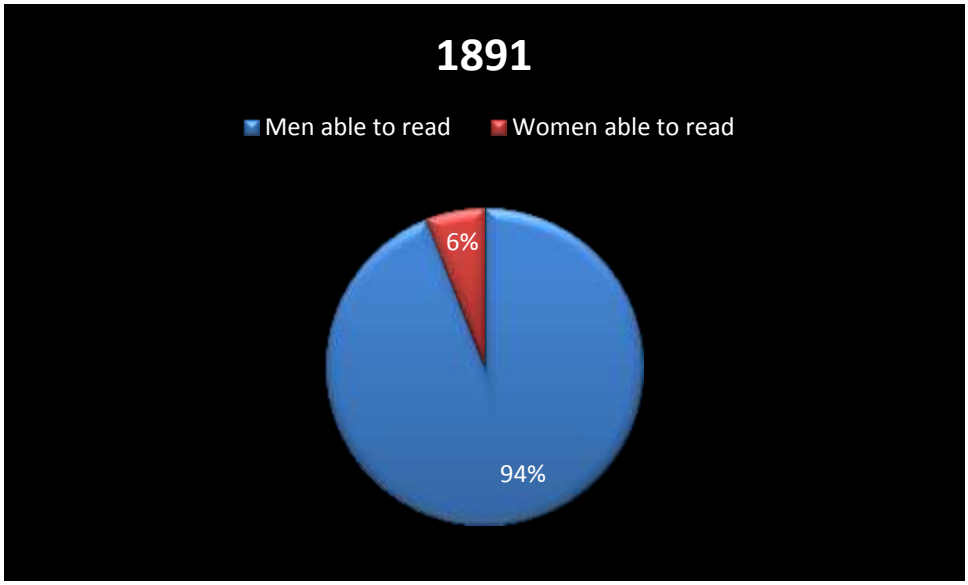


Figure 102 Marriage Customs: Purification

102a Purification of Yasodhara, The events of Buddha's life, Dambawa TV, middle eighteenth century

102b Purification of Yasodhara, The events of Buddha's life, Dambulla RMV, late eighteenth century

102c Purification of Mahamaya, The events of Buddha's life, Dambawa TV, late eighteenth century

102a

102b

102c

Figure 103 Marriage Customs: Pouring Water by Brid's Father

103a The events of Buddha's life, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

103b The events of Buddha's life, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

103c events of Buddha's life, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

103d *Vessantara Jataka,* Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

103a

103b

103c

103d

Figure 104 Marriage Customs: Participation of Bride's Mother at the Marriage Ceremony

104a *Vessantara Jātaka,* Kelaniya RMV, late nineteenth century

104b The story of Maha Dana Situ, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

104c *Vessantara Jātaka*, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

104d *Ummagga Jātaka* Ranvells PV, late nineteenth century

104a

104b

104c

104d

Figure 105 Marriage Customs: Participation of Both Parents of the Couple at the Marriage Ceremony: The Events of Buddha's Life

105a Gangarama RMV, late eighteenth century

105b Vagolla PV, early twentieth century

105a

105b

Figure 106 Travelling Methods of Women: Travel in Palanquins, The Events of Buddha's Life

106a Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

106b Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

106a

106b

Figure 107 Travelling Methods of Women: Riding Elephant

107a *Tēlapatta Jātaka*, Potgul Maliga RMV, early nineteenth century

107b *Tēlapatta Jātaka*, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

107c *Ummagga Jātaka*, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

107d *Ksāntivadi Jātaka*, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

107a

107b

107c

107d

Figure 108 Travelling Methods of Women: Travelling by Carriage

108a *Manicōra Jātaka*, Tunamahal V, early nineteenth century

108b *Ummagga Jātaka*, Ranvella PV, late nineteenth century

108a

108b

Figure 109 Travelling Methods of Women: Horse Driven Carts

109a *Vessantara Jātaka*, Asgiri Gedige RMV, middle nineteenth century

109b *Vessantara Jātaka*, Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

109c *Vessantara Jātaka*, Ganekanda PV, late eighteenth century

109d *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

109a

109b

109c

109d

Figure 110 Travelling Methods of Women: Woman on a Boat, Astrological Symbols

110a Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

110b Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

110c Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

110d Sailabimbarama PV, late nineteenth century

110e Potgul Maliga MV, late eighteenth century

110f Dewagiri RMV, late nineteenth century

110g Subadrarama PV, late nineteenth century

110h Sudarshanarama Pv, Godapitiya, middle nineteenth century

110a

110b

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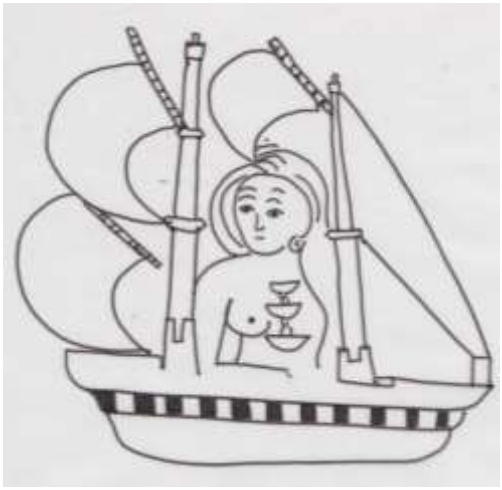

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Figure 111 Obeisance

111a Obeisance at the arrival, *Vessantara Jātaka,* Asgiri Gedige RMV, middle nineteenth century

111b Obeisance at the departure, *Vessantara Jātaka,* Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century

111c Obeisance for praying for life, *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century

111a

111b

111c

Figure 112 Weeping and Sorrow

112a Weeping Queen Candravati, *Culla-darmapala Jātaka*, Dowa RMV, early nineteenth century

112b Weeping Queen Candravati, *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Niyandawane RMV, early twentieth century

112c Weeping Prince Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Vijesundararama RMV, late eighteenth century

112d Weeping Patacara, The story of Patacara, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

112a

112b

112c

112d

ure 113 Weeping and Sorrow

113a Weeping Prince Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Vijesundararama RMV, late eighteenth century

113b Weeping palace maidens, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

113c Weeping palace maidens, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

113d Weeping Prince Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Potgu Maliga MV, late eighteenth century

113e Weeping Queen Candravati, *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Potgu Maliga MV, late eighteenth century

113f Weeping Prince Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Veligodapola TV, early nineteenth century

113g Weeping Prince Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century

113h Weeping Queen Candravati, *Culla-darmapala Jctaka*, Veligodapola TV, early nineteenth century

113i Weeping Queen Candravati, *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century

113a

113b

113c

113d

113e

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113h

113i

Figure 114 Weeping and Sorrow

114a Weeping Prince Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Veligodapola TV, early nineteenth century

114b Weeping Prince Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Velikotuwa, *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, late nineteenth century

114c Weeping woman Ummagga Jataka, Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

114d Weeping Queen Candravati, *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Potgu Maliga MV, late eighteenth century

114e Weeping Prince Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Vagolla PV early twentieth century

114f Weeping woan, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

114g Weeping Prince Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Subadrarama PV, late nineteenth century

114h Weeping Patacara, the story of Patacara, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

114I Weeping Queen Candravati, *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Niyandawane RMV, early twentieth century

114j Weeping Queen Candravati, *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Potgu Maliga MV, late eighteenth century

114k Weeping Queen Candravati, *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Hindagala RMV, early nineteenth century

114l Weeping Kuweni, the story of King Vijaya, Potgu Maliga MV, late eighteenth century

114m Weeping Queen Phusati, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

114n Weeping Prince Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

114o Weeping Prince Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

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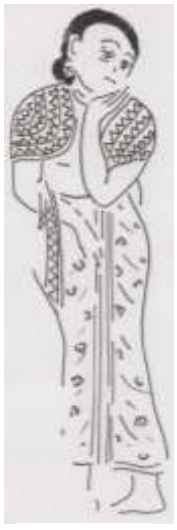

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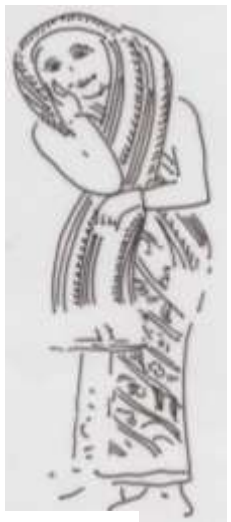

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Figure 115 Weeping and Sorrow: Weeping Palace Maidens

115a, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Degaldoruwa RMV, early nineteenth century

115b Temiya *Jātaka* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

115c *Vessantara Jātaka*, Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

115d *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century

115a

115b

115c

115d

Figure 116 Weeping and Sorrow: Difference of Weeping Men and Women

116a *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka,* Hindagala RMV, early nineteenth century

116b *Sama Jātaka,* Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

116c Events of Buddha's life, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

116d *Temiya Jātaka,* Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

116a

116b

116c

116d

Figure 117 Difference of Weeping Men and Women

117a *Sāma Jātaka*, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

117b *Culla-darmapala Jātaka*, Hindagala RMV, early nineteenth century

117c *Tēmiya Jātaka*, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

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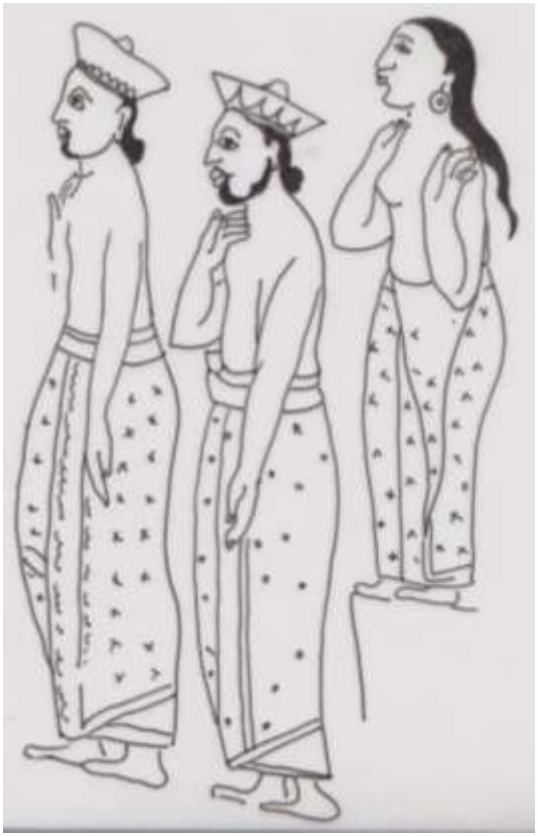

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Figure 118 Weeping and Sorrow of Women

118a Weeping Kuveni, the story of King Vijaya, Potgu Maliga MV, late eighteenth century

118b Weeping Queen Phusati, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Kumara MV, late nineteenth century

118c Weeping Prince Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

118d Weeping Prince Mandri, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

118a

118b

118c

118d

Figure 119 Old Men and Women

119a Old woman, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Asgiri Gedige RMV, middle nineteenth century

119b Old woman, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

119c Old woman, A scene of Procession , Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century

119d Old man, The events of Buddha's life, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

119a

119b

119c

119d

Figure 120 Old women

120a Old woman, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

120b Old woman, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Rekava RMV, late nineteenth century

120c Old woman, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

120d Old woman, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Asgiri Gedige RMV, middle nineteenth century

120e Old woman, A scene of Procession , Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century

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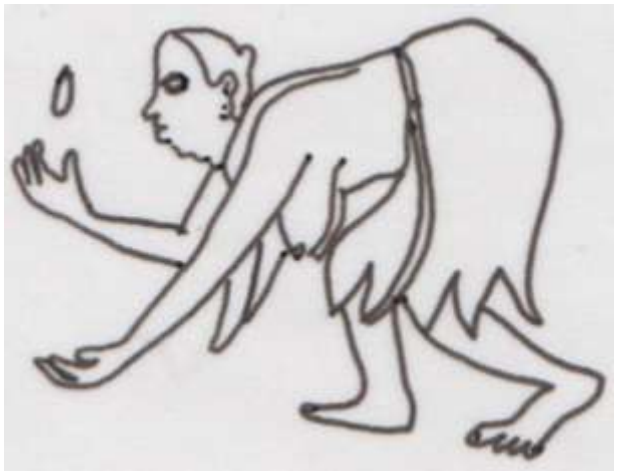

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Figure 121 The Difference of Skin Colour

121a The difference of skin colour of men and women, *Sāma Jātaka*, Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century

121b The difference of skin colour of executioner, *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Dowa RMV, early nineteenth century

121c The difference of skin colour of palace servants, *Culla-darmapāla Jātaka*, Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century

121a

121b

121c

Figure 122 Dress and Ornamentation

122a Dress of Kandyan elite woman , Ivory carving, The British museum (Reg no: 1985.11.15.4) circa seventeenth-eighteenth century

122b Dress of Kandyan elite women Ivory carving, National Museum, Kandy, circa eighteenth century, (Reg No:X218.14) circa eighteenth century

122c Dress of Kandyan elite women Ivory carving, National Museum, Kandy, circa eighteenth century, (Reg No: X.220.14) circa eighteenth century

122d Dress used by Kandyan elite women, National Museum, Kandy (cupboard no: 2) circa seventeenth-eighteenth century

122e Dress used by Kandyan elite women, National Museum, Kandy (Cupboard no: 2), circa seventeenth-eighteenth century

122a

122b

122c

122d

122e

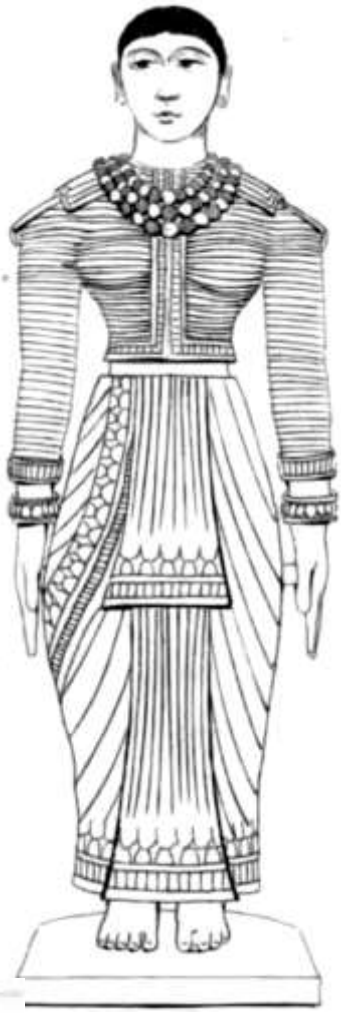
Figure 123 Dress and Ornamentation Recorded by Foreign Travellers

123a A figure of the a queen, sketch of Davy (1821)

123b A figure of a noble woman, sketch of Davy (1821)

123c A figure of a noble woman, sketch of Knox (1681)

123b



123a

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Figure 124 Dress and Ornamentation

124a Queen with Mottakkili (Kerchief), *Vessantara Jātaka*, Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century

124b Queen with Mottakkili (Kerchief), *SaccamkiraJ ātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

124c Yasodara with Mottakkili (Kerchief), The events of Buddha's life, Dambawa TV, middle eighteenth century

124d Queen with Mottakkili (Kerchief) , a wooden panel, National Museum, Kandy (Cupboard no: 42), circa eighteenth century

124a

124b

124c

124d

Figure 125 Dress and Ornamentation

125a Queen with Mottakkili (Kerchief), *Vessantara Jātaka*, Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century

125b Queens with Mottakkili (Kerchief), *Vessantara Jātaka*, Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century

125c Queen with Mottakkili (Kerchief), *Vessantara Jātaka*, Potgul Maliga MV, late eighteenth century

125d Yasodara with Mottakkili (Kerchief), The events of Buddha's life, Dambawa TV, middle eighteenth century

125e Queen with Mottakkili (Kerchief), *Saccamkira Jātaka*, Sunandarama PV, early nineteenth century

125a

125b

125c

125d

125e

Figure 126 Dress and Ornamentation

126a Hair pins and west pendants of women, National Museum Colombo (Cupboard no: 31), circa seventeenth-eighteenth century

126b Hair pins and bangles of Sri Lankan women, The British Museum, (Reg nos. OA.1953.12.18.14, OA.1953.12.18.15, OA.1953.12.18.16, OA.1953.12.18.18, OA. 1953.12.18.14) circa seventeenth-eighteenth century

126c Necklaces, SenaratParanavitana Reaching and Research Museum, University of Peradeniya (Cupboard no: 1), circa seventeenth-eighteenth century

126d Bangles, National Museum, Kandy(Cupboard no: 19b), circa seventeenth-eighteenth century

126a

126b

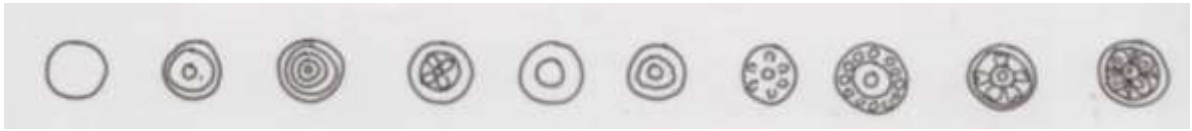
126c

126d

Figure 127 Dress and Ornamentation: Ear Ring

127 a Deagldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century
127 b Dambawa TV, middle eighteenth century
127 c Madanwala RMV, late eighteenth century
127 d Veligodapola TV, early nineteenth century
127 e Dambawa TV, middle eighteenth century
127 f Dambawa TV, middle eighteenth century
127 g Bodhimalkada PV, late nineteenth century
127 h Bodhimalkada PV, late nineteenth century
127 i Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century
127 j Sudarshanrama Pv, Velihinda, late nineteenth century
127 k Medawala TV, middle eighteenth century
127 l Nagavimana PV, early nineteenth century
127 m Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century
127 n Medawala TV, middle, eighteenth century Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century
Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century
127 o Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century
127 p Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century
127 q Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century
127 r Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century
127 s Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century
127 t Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century
127 u Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century
127 v Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century
127 w Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century
127 x Asgiri Gedige RMV, middle nineteenth century
127 y Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century
127 z Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century
127 aa Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century
127 bb Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century
127 cc Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century
127 dd Vagolla PV, early twentieth century
127 ee Vagolla PV, early twentieth century
127 ff Sudarshanrama PV, Godapitiya, late nineteenth century
127 gg Vagolla PV, early twentieth century
127 hh Vagolla PV, early twentieth century
127 ii Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century
127 jj, Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century
127 kk Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century
127 ll Velikotuwa PV, late nineteenth century, Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century
127 mm Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century
127 nn Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century
127 oo Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century
127 pp Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century
127 qq Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century, Asgiri Gedige RMV, middle nineteenth century
127 rr Potgul Maliga MV, late eighteenth century
127 ss Samudragiri PV, late nineteenth century
127 tt Sudarshanarama Pv, Velihinda, late nineteenth century
127 uu Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century
127 vv Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

127a 127b 127c 127d 127e 127f 127g 127h



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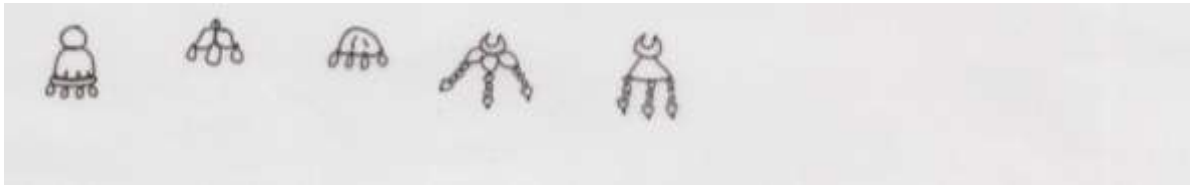
127s 127t 127u 127v 127w 127x 127y 127z 127aa

127bb 127cc 127dd 127ee 127ff 127gg 127hh 127ii 127jj

127kk 127ll 127mm 127nn 127oo 127pp 127qq



127rr 127ss 127tt 127uu 127vv

Figure 128 Dress and Ornamentation: Necklaces

128 a Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century

128 b Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century

128 c Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

128 d Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

128 e Asgiri Gedige RMV, early nineteenth century

128 f Potgul Maliga MV, late eighteenth century

128 g Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

128 h Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

128 i Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

128 j Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

128 k Nagavimana PV, early nineteenth century

128 l Arattana RMV, late eighteenth century

128 m Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

128 n Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

128 o Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

128 p Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

128 q Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

128 r Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

128 s Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

128 t Potgul Maliga MV, late eighteenth century

128 u Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century

128 v Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century

128 w Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

128 x Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

128 y Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

128 z Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

128 aa Tunmahal PV, early nineteenth century

128 ab Tunmahal PV, early nineteenth century

128 ac Degaldoruwa RMV, late eighteenth century

128 ad Vagolla PV, early twentieth century

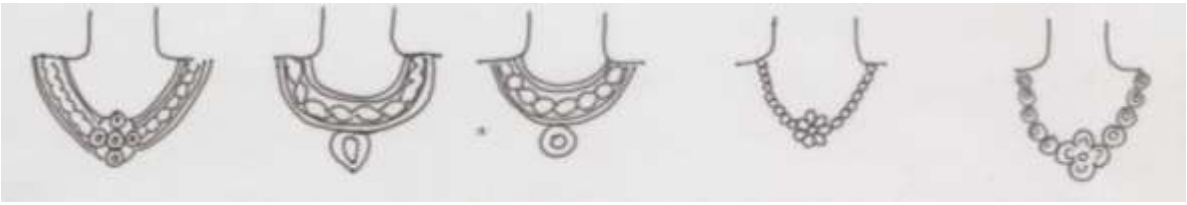
128a 128b 128c 128d 128e

128f 128g 128h 128i 128j

128k 128l 128m 128n 128o

128p 128q 128r 128s 128t

128u 128v 128w 128x 128y



128z 128aa 128bb 128cc 128dd

Figure 129 Dress and Ornamentation: Necklaces

129 a Vagolla PV, early twentieth century

129b Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

12 c Jetavanarama RMV, middle nineteenth century

129 d Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

129 e Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

129 f Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

129 g Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

129 h Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

129 i Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century

129 j Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

129 k Nagaviman PV, early nineteenth century

129 l Nagavimana PV, early nineteenth century

129 m Talawa RMV, late eighteenth century

129 n Talawa RMV, late eighteenth century

129 o Nagaviman PV, early nineteenth century

129 p Suriyagoda RMV, late eighteenth century

129 q Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century

129 r Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

129 s Gangarama MV, late nineteenth century

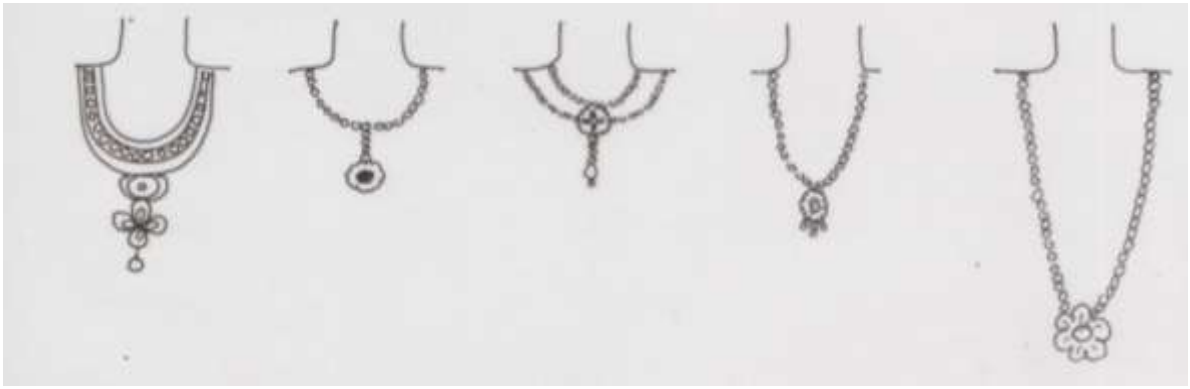
129 t Ranvella PV, middle nineteenth century

129 u Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

129a 129b 129c 129d 129e

129f 129g 129h 129i 129j

129k 129l 129m 129n 129o



129p 129q 129r 129s 129t

129u

Figure 130 Gender Identity and Objects

130a Man carries a sword, *Telapatta Jātaka,* Potgulmaliga MV, late eighteenth century

130b King Vessantara carries a sword on his way to the forest hermitage, *Vessantra Jātaka,* Arattana RMV, late eighteenth century

130b King Vessantara keeps a sword at the forest hermitage, *Vessantra Jātaka*, Telwatta RMV, early nineteenth century

130a

130b

130c

Figure 131 Gender Identity and Objects

131a A woman carries a flower, *Vessantara Jataka,* Hindagala RMV, early nineteenth century

131b Woman carries a flower, Un Identified story, Subadrarama PV, late nineteenth century

131c A woman carries a flower and woman carries a folded fan, Purvarama PV, late nineteenth century

131d Woman carries a folded fan, Subadrarama PV, late nineteenth century

131a

131b

131c

131d

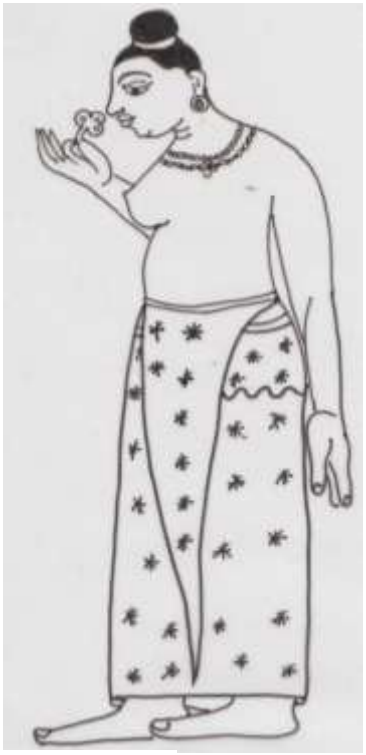
Figure 132 Gender Identity and Objects

132a A woman carries a flower, *Vessantara Jātaka*, Hindagala RMV, early eighteenth century

132b A woman carries a flower, un identifies story, Sailbimbarama PV, late eighteenth century

132c A woman carries a flower, life of Buddha, Sudarshanarama PV, Velihinda, late nineteenth century

132d A woman carries a flower, *Tēmiya Jātaka*, Talawa RMV, late eighteenth century



132a

132b

132c

132d